Adopted Daughter;

OR THE

HISTORY

OF

Miss CLARISSA B---.

In Two VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HISTORY

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Miss CLARISSA B---.

LETTERI

Miss Clarissa B—. to Miss Charlotte
Brudnell.

I lotte-I shall never be able to support your absence. I have so long been accustomed to your dear society, that no time, I am convinced, will ever reconcile me to my loss. It already appears an age since you lest me; I have a thousand things to Vol. I. B

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tell you, and as many to ask; I am undone for want of your advice; I am forlorn and defolate for want of your company; in short, my dear friend, your past condefcending goodness has ruined me. Nothing, but your immediate return, can restore me to peace and tranquillity.-And yet, I fear, if it must indeed depend on that so wished event, I may already begin to despair, for can I flatter myself, that my dear Mrs. Brudnell will so soon give up the pleasure she must receive from her Charlotte's company, to gratify my inclination?-Yes, my dear friend, I see the folly of my hopes, and the impropriety of fuch a request. But I will write to you, Charlotte, that confolation is still left me, and shall, for the future, be my favourite employ, as well as amusement-I have no tafte left for any other-the delightful woods and rural scenes, where with you I have fpent fo many ferene and happy hours, no longer please me; you, Charlotte, have robbed them of all their charms:

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I now wander through them without finding any of that fatisfaction and felicity I once believed it in their power to give—a thousand gloomy and distressing ideas, in spite of all my efforts, will crowd on my imagination, and—shall I confess—are sometimes but too much indulged?

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I know this confession will draw upon me your anger, and that I must expect a fevere reproof, for having so little profited by the many lessons you have given me on that subject; yes, Charlotte, I am senfible of this, and that I must prepare to meet your sore displeasure; but tell me, can I be perfectly at ease? Is it possible I should not sometimes be tormented with difagreeable reflections, circumstanced as I am?---Spare me, my dear friend, and acknowledge I have but too much reason to repine, and feel a thousand anxious, yet fruitless emotions. Is it so trifling a misfortune to be deprived of father, mother and every tender endearing connection? Ignorant of those who gave me being, B 2

me with!-My generous and amiable be-

n efactors are, indeed, ever indulgent and

kind; their bounty knows no bounds.

I am convinced they love me as their own

being, and brought me into this troublefome and, to me at least, dreary world? --- Tell me, Charlotte, can a heart, fufceptible as mine, of every tender feeling, can it, I fay, forbear at fome moments to repine, that it is obliged every hour to be receiving obligations, without having the fmallest shadow of hope ever to repay them? No, my dear friend, your own will declare against you, should you attempt to condemn me .-- I am an orphan--- a forfaken, miserable orphan, Charlotte---this is a truth but too fatally certain. Can I then forget so dreadful a circumstance, and be the contented happy creature you would perfuade me I am?-Alas! how vain! how impracticable are those philosophic lessons, you have so kindly, so sweetly favoured

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lotte, my first, my great, and too just cause of affliction remains—and, alas, I fear ever must.—No hope remains to chear the dreary prospect—your company only had power to dispel these gloomy ideas, your lively, yet fweetly amiable conversation, made me forget my forrows. Think then, my dear friend, what I lose by your absence, and you will not accuse me of flattery, when I tell you I am miserable without you. - Willyou write to me often, Charlotte?—Will you fuffer me to intrude on your happy moments with my melancholy complaints? Indulge me, my amiable friend, let me at least have the confolation of your dear, fincerely wished for correspondence, since I cannot be bleffed with your enlivening company. -This shall console me for the want of every other felicity,

Adieu, my dear Charlotte, let me befeech you to raise my drooping spirits by a long, very long letter. Remember it will, in my present disconsolate frame of

B 3

mind,

mind, be an act of charity—need I fay more?—Again adieu.

LETTER II.

Miss Brudnell to Miss Clarissa B-.

Heavens! My dear Clara, what a woeful ditty have you made choice of to begin our correspondence !- I shall never recover-I am dying with the fpleen and vapours ever fince I read the first line. What, in the name of fortune, has happened fince I left your peaceful abode?-No, no, my dear-you must excuse me for that agreeable and pleasing as my company must ever be, and you may depend upon it I am perfectly fentible of its value—it cannot be merely the want of that felicity that has reduced you to this deplorable condition.—Vain as I am, child, I cannot be perfuaded to believe this piece of flattery, however pleafing it may be. Fie upon you, Clara, what a lift of woes have you collected to torment your heart! -Angry

Angry with you?—Yes, my dear, you might well dread my displeasure. I am not clear that I shall ever forgive you for being the author of so ridiculous a letter-Pardon me, Clara, but I must call it so, however mortifying, though you, no doubt, thought it mighty moving. Come, come, confess, it is not intirely owing to my absence that you are so totally forlorn and defolate.—I'll lay my life I could find another reason for all these mournful reflections, these gloomy ideas. Not but you have found a very plaufible ftory, in which it must be owned there is some degree of truth; but what, in the name of fortune, has brought them all fo fresh into your memory just at this juncture?-Shall I guess, Clara?-O that wicked Harry! how durst he steal a glance at any other nymph but his own?—It was monstrous, I confess—what, could not beauty like yours content him, but he must be ogling every girl that comes within fight of his bewitching eyes?-Let him, B 4 Clara

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Clara—for this or fome other affair of equal importance is, I am convinced, the true cause of all your world of woe—Let him, I say—and believe me they must ever return with double pleasure to gaze on you. Where else can they ever find an object so perfectly amiable, so entirely suited to his elegant taste and judgment?—No where—be assured he is yours, and only yours, beyond the power of sate.

But after all, if I am really mistaken in my conjectures, which, by the way, Clara, is very seldom the case, and your grief is absolutely occasioned only by those melancholy ideas you so feelingly describe; I must, with your permission, tell you, I think you, if possible, more to blame than before. True, your parents are at present unknown, and how much longer they will continue so, depends entirely on their own will; but I am not without hope that some time or other they will disclose themselves, to the great joy of their now desponding daughter.—And to say the truth,

truth, I am not without my share of impatience for the discovery, more than your-self, being persuaded we shall have a most delightful history when they are pleased to let us into the secret—for that they will sooner or later, is a point I take for granted.

But, in the mean time, why all this grief and affliction? why all this anxiety? -fhall I add pride, Clara?-Dependance is not the most elegible state in life I admit-but pray, tell me, what state in life is free from care and trouble? what fituation or rank in life perfectly content and happy ?-You have often told me indeed that you thought mine fo.-No fuch thing -don't deceive yourself with any such imagination.-I look, Clara, ever on the bright fide of the prospect, and even the worst has always funshine, more or less, nor can I think yours fo very dark and cloudy as you would perfuade yourfelf. You live at ease, in the most delightful. fituation in the world, want for nothing

you can in reason defire, have as many friends as acquaintance—for who can know and not esteem you?-Mr. and Mrs. Bellmour adore you, if possible, more than their own Harry.-What now, my dear girl, can you defire more?-Shall I guess again, Clara?—Have patience, child, who knows what that and time may produce?—They have before now brought more unlikely things to pass than what I mean-not that you can poffibly imagine what that is-O no-you, a poor innocent creature, never fo much as thought of fuch a thing-much less wish'dit-no, no,-I am quite deceived for once, however I may pique myself on my fagacity. May be fo, Clara-doyou, however, practice this same grace of patience as you do every other, and leave to providence the rest. With this wife and sober maxim I'll take my leave as foon as I have implored you to fend me no more fuch melting epiftles as your last, as I am convinced fuch another would infallibly be my death= you have already brought upon me the vapours, a disorder which, however fashionable, I thank my stars, I am no way fubject to .- You fee, Clara, what you'll have to answer for, should you, in spite of all these reasons, still persevere in your

plaintive strain.

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Adieu-If you are again on speaking terms with your fwain, you may present him with my love-O fie-I mean refpects-nothing more upon my honour. Once more adieu-I know nothing more difficult than to leave off writing while there is any paper left, but one should fometimes practice a little felf denial; fo, my dear girl, in downright earnest, farewel.

Your's, as you behave,

CHARLOTTE BRUDNELL.

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LETTER III.

Miss Clarissa B-. to Miss Brudnell.

DLESS me, my dear Charlotte, D what a lecture! I protest you have fet my poor epiftle in so ridiculous a light, that I am more than half ashamed of it. Yet, after all, my complaints can never be so entirely groundless as you would perfuade me-though I will confess, since I have read your last, they have, or at least seem to have, lost much of their weight.-Continue, then, I befeech you, my dear friend, to chide me with this mixture of fweetness and raillery, and, by this agreeable means, cure me of repining, and indulging -perhaps -groundless fears -you tell me they are fo, and I will endeavour to believe it.

O, my dear Charlotte, what an agreeable flatterer can you be when you please!
—Shall I, in return, confess you are not
without some share of penetration, and
that

that it would be in vain, were I inclined to attempt it, to endeavour concealing any of my thoughts, fince it is plain you can discover them even at this distance?-Well then, I will own that I was at that moment a little disconcerted. - My Harry mine did I call him?—O, heavens! Charlotte, do not encourage me in fuch prefumptuous hopes. - No, my dearfriend, that can never-never be-use your influence to convince me of my folly in cherishing, even for a moment, so delusive, vet, ah Charlotte! delightful idea.-Yes my dear friend, 'tis on this subject you must employ your eloquence; for is it in nature to imagine, kind and indulgent as my dear protectors are, they will ever confent to give up all the hopes they have, no doubt, formed in favour of their beloved fon ?-No, Charlotte, they have probably made choice of a very different person.-Nor can I blame them, for does not prudence, nay do not a thousand other weighty confiderations, call upon them to feek our

Harry is gone for a fews days on some business of his father's to Northampton.—
I hope he will not find it more tedious than he at first imagined, as I fear his abfence, added to that of your's, would give reason for a second reproof, by making

making me again relapse into my late despair.—Indeed, if I may believe him, this absence, though for so short a time, is worse than death.—His adieus were repeated a thousand times, and as many engaging promises made of a speedy return. Oh, why, my dear Charlotte, is he so infinitely amiable? Or rather, why am I, by my unhappy destiny, rendered so very unworthy all that profusion of tenderness he so sweetly expresses for me, and that continual assiduity, by which he endeavours to make me forget every disagreeable restection that would, even for a moment, disturb my peace?

But tell me, my dear friend, am I not guilty of an amazing weakness, thus to cherish in my breast a passion that can only serve to add to those misfortunes of which I already so much complain?—Alas! I am perfectly sensible of my folly, and yet am continually endeavouring to form a thousand excuses for my conduct, and every moment attempting to justify

it to myself .- If I find even this difficult, what would become of me were I called to account by those who, thank heaven, have however no fuspicion of my ingratitude?-For would it not be fuch to the last degree, should I endeavour to destroy their hopes by giving their fon a beggar to wife ?- No, Charlotte, whatever I may fuffer, my heart shudders at the bare idea of making fo ungenerous a return for all the numberless obligations I every hour receive from this worthy family. Lovely and amiable as he is, I will not forget what I owe them. I may be unhappy, but I never will be unjust .- My heart indeed is gone—it was lost before I was fenfible that it was in danger. Brought up together from our infancytaught to love and efteem him by the example of every one,-how could I, intime, check this almost natural affection? how forbear to indulge the pleafing, nay the only joy I knew on earth, that of loving and being beloved by my Harry? -When

I am going to take a folitary ramble in Sir William's park, where I will meditate on the refolution I have made, which I hope will be strengthened and confirmed by the pleasing resection it will afford me of having done my duty.—Encourage me, my dear creature, in the just design, let your persuasive eloquence plead the cause of justice—prudence—gratitude. Heavens, Charlotte, what a catalogue of graces was I going to violate!—Adieu, believe me ever yours.

CLARISSA B -.

LETTER IV.

To the SAME.

Let T my example, Charlotte, encourage you ever to persevere in the path-of your duty; little do you imagine how nobly I have been rewarded, for the bare intention of doing mine.

In my last I told you I was going to take a walk in the park belonging to the castle, that I might, without interruption, indulge my meditations on the change of sentiments my heart was going to experience. The day was delightful, and I sallied forth, charmed to find myself capable

pable of forming a resolution so just and

prudent.

After walking till I was weary in that enchanting place, I went into your favourite arbour, determined to rest myself there after my walk. I had my work in my pocket, and had just seated myfelf, in order to spend an hour or two in that fweet retirement, when chancing to cast my eyes down the walk, facing my retreat, who should I see approaching, with flow and folemn steps, but our reverend pastor, good Mr. Brown! I immediately concluded be too was come forth to meditate on some as pious a design as my own, and feared, if he faw me, his thoughts might, perhaps, in spite of his philosophy, wander from the subject they were then engaged on. Too well disposed myself at that moment to lead others aftray, I instantly withdrew my eyes, lest he should think I observed him; but what was my amaze, Charlotte, when he convinced me in a few minutes, that his steps were directed

rected to where I was fitting! As he drew near, I observed him with great attention eyeing something he carried in his hat.

At last in he came, and in his usual solemn, sober manner, paid his compliments, then with a trembling hand held out the present he had brought me, which was no less than a nest of beautiful nightingales. He, with prodigious respect, much more I thought than the case required, begged I would do him the honour to accept those little creatures, whose natural sweetness of voice, would, he said, when once blessed with an opportunity of hearing mine, so much improve, he hoped, as to afford me some degree of pleasure.

You may believe I was too much pleased with the pretty creatures to hesitate a moment about doing him the very great honour he desired, as you know, Charlotte, I am fond of birds, and these are not very common;—but, heavens! my dear creature, what a present did he offer me next! the good man was in a most intolerably generous mood,

mood, that's most certain—guess—if you can, I mean-though I think I might fafely give you till this day twelve month to do it in, and excuse you if you failed at last.—Such a gift, Charlotte! alas! poor Harry! your doom is now fixed indeed .- Such a rival !- yes, my friend, a. rival, that cannot fail to eclipse his charms, blooming and beautiful as he is. - Even Harry himself will be obliged to confess that my inconstancy was unavoidable, tempted as I have been.—He has declared himself my lover, Charlotte, with as much folemnity as ever he preached a funeral fermon--- Truth upon my honour--and I must confess he would have amazed me much less-my situation consideredif he had declared himself my grandfather

What do you think of my new captive?—shall I ever after this dare to repine, or accuse providence of unkindness?—If I should, you may indeed, with justice, condemn my ingratitude.—

I have not yet, however, fixed the day for our nuptials, though you may believe my impatience for that happy hour will not permit me to be very cruel to my fwain.-But I will endeavour to be ferious-or rather I should ask, are you difposed to be so, after what I have related?-Sincerely then, Charlotte, what I tell you is absolutely fact—he has made me such offers, and faid fo many tender, passionate things, that it will be utterly impossible to refift his eloquence. I tried, however, unwilling to incur the censure of inconstancy; and great as my temptation was, I with all the delicacy and respect imaginable, endeavoured to convince him how very fenfible I was of the honour he did me by the generous offer he made, but hoped he would pardon my fincerity, when I affured him I could not possibly accept it, nor give him the smallest hopes or encouragement. Matrimony, I faid, was one of the points I had never yet feriously reflected on, but I was, however, of opinion, that unless that union was founded upon motives of esteem and inclination by both the parties, there was but a very fmall chance of their ever being happy.-Excuse me, added I, if-though I have a very just sense of your worth and merit as a friend, and have ever thought myself honoured by that share of esteem with which I flatter myfelf you have fo obligingly favoured me-I cannot think of you as a lover.—This, Sir, is using you with perhaps too much freedom, but be affured it is the respect I have for you, that induces me to treat you with this fincerity, as I have too great a value for your peace to keep you a moment in suspence. This will, I hope, apologize for the liberty I have taken, and that apparent ingratitude you may perhaps think me guilty of, in thus rejecting the offer you have made, which I am extremely fenfible is perfectly generous and difinterested.

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In spite of all this flourishing confolation, the good man did not feem quite fo well reconciled to my prodigious fincecerity as might have been expected-no Charlotte—the disappointment did not sit very graceful upon him-he was not in the least prepared for so mortifying a compliment.—What !—a girl in my humble unhappy circumstances—a dependant on the bounty of strangers-an orphan, without either friends, fortune or family, did the presume to reject the hand and heart of a man worth three hundred pounds a year, and that man not very much above fixty?—quite a youth for age.—O, fie upon you, Clara, fie upon you-She did, indeed, Charlotte, but furely it was done with respect and decorum.

He bowing left me, but begged I would permit him to flatter himself with the hope that I would reflect a little on the offer he had presumed to make, and not at once doom him to despair.

Shall I reflect a little on what he has prefumed to offer, Charlotte?—or shall I not?—I think I had better consult my friend Harry—no longer lover you know. Aye, I think I will.—Adieu, my dear, do not be too much amazed if my next epistle should be dated from the parsonage house, it's a very neat one, you know, and wants nothing but a mistress to govern it.—Adieu once more. Ever yours,

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HARRY has now been gone a long week, and I begin to fancy I have already made an amazing progress in my new system. I shall meet him, Charlotte, at his return, with all that placid serenity which this sober sentimental friendship cannot fail to inspire—No more uneasy, restless cares shall now disturb my breast. I may avow this gentle passion without a Vol. I. C crime;

crime; his parents will allow me this distinction, they will suffer him—nay I am sensible they would wish him—to be my friend. This indulgence will be no obstacle to their prudent views—even his happy bride, if she is worthy that envied felicity, will not deny me this consolation.
—But let me not too long meditate on this new plan; resection, I am much afraid, will not be the most likely means to bring it to perfection.

I have never, fince my adventure with my reverend lover, indulged myfelf in my favourite rambles, as I find no inclination in the world to give him a fecond opportunity to plead his paffon, for, great and violent as it is, I blufh—or at least ought to blufh—while I confess it gives me no fort of pleasure. I could not, till thus convinced, have believed my heart was so extremely hard and impenetrable.

I have fince that memorable day fpent most of my time in Sir William's Library. Here Here I indulge my meditations in the most delightful manner, without fear of interruption. As Mr. Bellmour has the care of that as well as the castle and park, &c. and as no books are wanting either for amusement or instruction, you may believe my hours glide on with tolerable Indeed the latter class I do not at this time study, as my amiable tutor is not with me to point out their beauties and direct my choice-and who, Charlotte, can fupply that loss? who so able, fo fweetly willing, to take that trouble, as himself?-Never was so bright a genius, and never was father more studious to cultivate and improve his fon's underflanding than is Mr. Bellmour. 'Tis amazing to me, when I consider his very moderate income, how it was possible for him to afford that expence his fon's education must have cost him---but who could resist the temptation?—Whoever had fuch a fon, born with every natural grace both of mind and person, could they but C 2

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barely wish to add that of art to render him what he certainly is---the most amiable and accomplished of his sex?---A very pretty object this for friendship, you will say---but smile on, Charlotte---my resolution is sixed, in spite of all these graces —remember the sacrifice I make will be the more meritorious.

My dear Mrs. Bellmour has sent to desire I will accompany her in a walk, and as I am sensible she means thereby only to amuse me, seldom walking to divert herself, I cannot refuse the favour she intends me.—I am sensible she has observed my having given up that exercise within these few days, and guessing, perhaps, that it is for want of a companion to share it with me, has obligingly determined to be one herself, till some other can be found.

How often do I regret the want of some agreeable family in that noblecastle, that no doubt once made this country sourish with its gay inhabitants!—I have heard Mrs.

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Mrs. Bellmour frequently speak in raptures of the late Lady Courtney, fince whose death Sir William never, for above a few days together, refided at B-. He leaves the care of every thing to Mr. Bellmour, of whose judgment and integrity he has justly the highest opinion. I never faw him, as I was at school when he used to visit his mansion, and ever since I returned from thence he has been abroad, but I am told he was, when young, immenfely handsome. What would I give that he would marry again! for to wish he would return without that circumstance, ashe has no children, would be adding but little to that fatisfaction. 'Tis the fociety of an agreeable family that I covet, some amiable daughters, with whom I might pass away my solitary hours; this would, indeed, be a most desirable felicity—but I hear nothing at present of either this, or his return.

Adieu, Charlotte, let your next epiftle, I beseech you, be of a more decent size C 3 than than the last, or it will be my turn next to scold—you have had yours, you know, Charlotte—and a very pretty genius you have for that accomplishment, I will do you the justice to confess.

Believe me ever yours.

CLARISSA B.

LETTER VI.

To the SAME.

Wr. Bellmour has absolutely been talking to me of my reverend lover. The good man has, it seems, opened his wounded heart to Mrs. Bellmour, and made such offers of his love—esteem—affection—and a thousand other moving arguments, that they are really of opinion I might be most amazingly happy under his fatherly care and tuition.

She spoke, indeed, with great tenderness and affection, assuring me she had no intention to offer the least violence to my incliinclination--- fhe loved me as her child, and ever had considered me as such, but were I really fo, Mr. Bellmour's income was too fmall to give me any fortune worth mentioning, and confequently an offer fo advantageous in point of interest would be highly acceptable.—She had promifed to speak to me on the subject, but if it was entirely disagreeable to me, I should hear no more of it .-- I assured her I was too sensible of the infinite obligations I was under to her family, not to be convinced the had a right to expect perfect obedience from me in every thing, and was, if she commanded me, ready to obey---but confessed that was the only motive that could make it possible for me to accept his propofal, however generous. She seemed much pleased with the gratitude I expressed, and declared my obedience should never, with her consent, meet with fo fevere a trial.

No more was faid on the subject, but, notwithstanding, I found my spirits sink

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in spite of all my endeavours to the contrary. I continued my walk however for some time, lest she should observe it, if I retired immediately, though you may believe I was not a little impatient to be alone, that I might resect on our past conversation.

And now tell me, Charlotte, whether you think it likely to produce any cogitations that will afford me much pleasure. -Your remedy of patience can now no longer flatter me with any hopes .--- You fee, my dear friend, how very necessary it was to call my heart to account, and enquire into its designs and expectations .--I wish, indeed, I had been a little more early in my refearch, as I might then, perhaps, have found the business less perplexed and troublesome, but hard and difficult as it is -- it must be done. All my hopes are now for ever blafted, not even the shadow of probability remains but, heavens, Charlotte, did I then really believe there ever was !- is it possible I should

should seriously have cherished a hope fo very chimerical ?--- Alas! I fear to answer with fincerity, I dare not examine the fentiments of my heart with that diligence which yet I ought--- O why, Harry, was you fo very amiable, why fo continually assiduous and attentive to my every wish? Could a heart, sensible as mine, to the tender feelings of gratitude, refuse its esteem for so many flattering distinctions? -fo many engaging proofs of that affection you fo oft have vowed no one should ever share but your Clarissa?-Alas! how vain are all those flattering profpects, those delusive hopes! they are gone for ever .--- No, Harry, I can never be yours.—Fond and indulgent as your father is in every other instance, in this he will be governed by fentiments which are but too univerfally approved.-Interest, prudence and discretion must direct his choice; and can you, even for a moment, believe these will ever lead him to me?---O poverty, 'tis now I experience that-

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e I ild that mortification to which thou art ever subject!

Pity me, my amiable Charlotte, for I am really in a fituation truly worthy of it.—Should they suspect their son's partiality for me, heaven knows what would be the consequence.—Yet they are kind and generous—and as I never will, on any consideration, be induced to disappoint their higher prospects, nor encourage in their son a passion so contrary to their defires, why should I fear? they cannot be unjust.—Let me depend on this, and endeavour to restore my mind to peace and tranquillity.

Adieu, my next letter will, I hope, be in a style more agreeable to your taste: nothing will be more likely to effect this change than one from you. Oblige me then, my dear Charlotte, as you dread the vapours.

I am ever yours.

CLARISSA B ...

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LETTER VIL

To the SAME.

TX7 E have just received an invitation to fpend a day at Mr. Jones's, whose family is just come down for the fummer; they have brought both their fons with them to stay a few months. The officer you have feen, I believe, but not the other, nor indeed do I remember much of him, as he has been mostly at Oxford. He is a greatfavourite of Harry's, and confequently pretty well in my good graces; they were at college together, where they contracted a strict friendship. -This diffinction is fo clear a proof of his merit, that it is no wonder I prefer him to his brother, even in spite of his red coat and cockade, a recommendation of no fmall weight with our fex, though I protest this charm is lost on me.-But I am an infenfible creature you know, Charlotte; witness Mr. Brown.

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36 THE HISTORY OF

A letter from Harry to Mrs. Bellmour informs us that he will be home to-mormorrow, and consequently of our party to the hall—not likely to be the more disagreeable for that, you may believe, though but a friend.

I must now endeavour to find a lover in some new swain, and who knows what may be the consequence of our intended visit? I will examine with a little more attention than I have hitherto done these Jones's, perhaps I may find charms in them, which my partiality for somebody else has, till now, made me overlook—the red coat, for instance, in compliment to your taste, and in consideration of his being the eldest.—He is handsome, you have often told me, Charlotte, though I gave but little attention to your encomiums then—but the case is altered now—alas, how changed!

The day is fixed for next Tuesday. Mrs. Bellmour and I go in the post chaise, Mr. Bellmour and Harry on horseback.

37

It was once proposed that I should mount a horse, as the way is particularly pleasant to his house, and not so far as to make it a fatigue, but I chose the former, as I think of all dreffes a habit, unless when on horseback, is the most ungraceful .---You may believe I did not give this as my reason, not being obliged to declare, unasked, that I had vanity enough to confider this distinction; but to you the affair will appear of some importance, --- for am I not going in quest of a lover? If this is not of consequence heaven knows what is, I am woefully afraid I shall be convinced of it by fad experience, for am I not, at this moment, in spite of my apparent gaiety, tormented on the account of one, Charlotte?—and yet I profess to be going in fearch of another.-I am in no small terrors lest one enchanting smile from your friend Harry, should in a moment make me forget that defign, as well as some others I have been at no little pains to form. He comes to-morrow, Charlotte,

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ck. It Charlotte, and has been absent three weeks.—Even as a friend, you know, I may rejoice, in some measure, at his return.

Adieu, continue to love your

CLARISSA B—.

LETTER VIII.

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To the SAME.

O, done!---my wife, my prudent resolutions, that cost me so much trouble, so many sober and sedate resections, are gone, totally vanished, Charlotte! they are destroyed and broke, to all intents and purposes.---Heavens! what a figure!---infinitely, if possible, handsomer than ever! Yes, one smile did the business, as I had foreseen.---Poor Colonel Jones must, for this time, excuse me, if I fail doing justice to his charms.

We had walked out to meet my friend Harry in his way through the park, when he no fooner faw us than, instantly quitting his horse, he slew with joy sparkling in his lovely eyes, and joined us in a moment. O, Charlotte, had you but feen his graceful, blooming figure---or with what tender folicitude he asked a thousand questions, without giving us time to anfwer one of them !--- Tears of joy, not without a mixture of forrow, at the remembrance of what had passed during his absence, in spite of all my efforts, stood trembling in my eyes .-- He faw it --- and, heavens, what were his emotions! How shall I describe to you the agony and sufpence that in a moment was visible in his expressive countenance? With sweet anxiety he tenderly enquired if I had been ill; --- but, fearful left he should betray the fecret of his heart, he turned to his mother, endeavouring to assume an air of more indifference, and begged she would tell him what had happened to Clara during

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during his absence, saying, he thought I did not look well.

I hope you are mistaken, Harry, said Mrs. Bellmour, I rather fancy the gravity you observe in her is owing to the thoughts of the lover she has gained since you left us. Matrimony, you know, my dear, is a very serious affair; especially when the lover is so very reverend a person as Clara has subdued.—Tell me, Clara, added she smiling, is it this subject that occasions your present gravity?

Indeed, my dear mamma, you never was more deceived: my countenance does not do me justice if, on the contrary, it expresses not a great deal of pleasure; since I am perfectly happy that Harry is returned, whose company we so much wanted to escort us to the hall.

Well, but this lover, faid he, though not the subject of your present meditations, has no doubt had a great share in them since I saw you, as the affair is so very far advanced. May I, Clara, be let into

into this secret, that I may give my opinion of the choice you have made? I have, hitherto, had the greatest reason to admire your taste and judgment on every occasion, but I am inclined to believe I shall not think so favourably of it on this.—But tell me, who is the happy man, that, in so very short a time, has been able to make so deep an impression on your heart?

O, faid Mrs. Bellmour, when you know that, Harry, you will no longer be furprised at the progress he has made.

We now reached the house, and agreeable as this raillery might be to her who, I am convinced, meant only to divert instead of giving me pain, I sound it had a very different effect. I saw it had distressed my amiable Harry, and that he would have given worlds for an opportunity to ask more particularly what she meant by this dreaded lover.

As foon as we entered I left him with his father, and went immediately to my

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apartment, where, to divert the difagreeable ideas that I found crowding on my imagination, I took up my pen to give you this account.

And now, my dear Charlotte, tell me, if you can, what will become of me? How shall I again recover that tranquility I flattered myfelf was fo firmly established, and by what powerful means guard my heart from those seducing charms?

Adieu for an hour---I will once more try what a walk and a few fober reflections will do---for that I must not indulge those which are alone dear to my heart is most certain-I am every moment more and more convinced of the danger I am in, if I do not for ever banish them from my breaft .-- You shall know my success when I return, till then--adieu.

After in vain feeking confolation in those delightful walks, where with you I have passed so many sweet and happy hours, I determined to try if a book would prove my give

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prove more fuccessful, and accordingly feated myfelf with great composure in the library. I was endeavouring to perfuade myfelf that all the cares and troubles we continually meet with in this life, are not worthy that anxiety they fo frequently occasion, when Hervey's Meditations prefented themselves to my view .-- I eagerly took them down, convinced that they--if any-would certainly confirm my opinion. A very few pages had indeed that defirable effect; I was, in half an hour, convinced of this world's vanity, and, with great fervour, acknowledged, that all was vexation of spirit .--- This, Charlotte, you will allow I could testify from experience. As I read on, I was amazed at my past weakness, in giving way to so many fears, fo many apprehensions, and all for the fleeting, transitory things of this short and very uncertain life---even Harry was, at that moment, comparatively, indifferent to me .-- I was going to return to join the family and him with the utmost composure,

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convinced of my folly in the hopes I had so long entertained, and not less of the imperfect happiness, our most flattering expectations yield, when gratified to the utmost of our wishes :--- Thus fortified --thus convinced .-- I arose, with prodigious dignity in my manner, rejoicing in the conquest I had gained, and though perhaps not the better able from the folemn contemplations I had been engaged, to join in trifling gaiety and diffipation, yet nobly prepared to converse in a more rational and exalted strain .-- In this disposition of mind, and with a philosophic gravity was I walking towards the door---when who should enter at that moment the study, but the very youth who had given rise to all my wise and prudent reflections!---It was indeed no other than the lovely Harry, who, after traverfing the whole gardens in fearch of your friend, was told by the gardener that Miss Clara was in the library. That he flew on the wings of love I take for granted, as he arrived the ring the d--ious the perlemn d, to

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arrived just time enough to prevent all that treason I had been plotting against the litttle deity--no wonder he lent him wings on fo important an occasion, as to convince me that one finile from him was no fuch imaginary bleffing, as Hervey had perfuaded me .--- My whole flock of philofophy flew in a moment again to its place in the library, from whence I had borrowed it, and the uncertainty of this life feemed now a very poor reason why we should not innocently enjoy those few pleasures it does afford, supposing them few, which, however, at that moment, I was far from believing. Need tot me seemed from

May I, Clara, faid he, gently taking my hand; may I, after what has passed in my fatal absence, presume to approach you with that freedom, you once so sweetly indulged me in, and to which my heart has fo long been accustomed?---Dare I hope for the continuance of those smiles that are the only bleffings I value on earth? -- I have ever been accustomed to join the farg the mon I can, while great

idea of my Clara, in every scheme of happiness I have formed; deprive me of her

dulged presumptuous hopes.---But say, Clarissa---who is this happy, truly happy man, that is by fortune destined to such exquisite felicity?---Tell me by what irressible eloquence he has robbed me of the only treasure I valued on earth.

Indeed, Mr. Bellmour, if your present

fuch have been my fond, my too fondly in-

Indeed, Mr. Bellmour, if your present uneasiness is only occasioned by the sears you mention, I can, with great ease, re-

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lieve you from it, by affuring you I have given no encouragement, no hopes to any man, much less should I be inclined to do so in favour of the person Mrs. Bellmour was pleafed to mention as my lover; nor will you, I believe, much doubt my fincerity when informed who it is that has thus alarmed your fears .-- Be affured he has found none from me, nor, I greatly fear, ever will, however fensible I am, that my gratitude and duty to your family ought to inspire me with different sentiments. He has their approbation, and, confequently, has a right to expect mine. They are indeed too indulgent to force my inclinanation, but furely the obligations I am under, for the infinite favours I every hour receive, demand this facrifice, as the only return I can ever make to their unbounded generofity .--- Yes, let me obey them---fince every other pleafing hope is fled. It is now too plain they never meant to indulge those you have so kindly entertained in my favour .-- No, Harry, that flattering

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flattering prospect is vanished, and I have only now to banish the too pleasing remembrance of it from my memory-I will confess I fear the task will not be an easy one, but a necessary one it certainly is, both for your peace and mine.

'Tis well, Clariffa; --- you have, indeed. with great coolness and philosophy settled a point that I now too clearly fee has never made any very deep impression on your heart, or believe me you would find those specious reasons, those so very wife and prudent reflections of fmall weight, if put in competition with a love like mine.--Yes, Clara, my hopes, indeed, are vain, I now am, by dreadful experience, convinced they are so; --- but little did I believe you would, with fuch cold indifference, have pronounced that fatal truth .--O, my lovely, my adored Clarissa! is it possible, after all my flattering dreams of happiness, that I should really be reduced in a moment to the miserable wretched creature you have affured me I am ?---for

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have you not declared that heart [which to possess I would, were I master of the universe, with joy give up, nor ever cast a wish after its envied treasure] can never be mine?—My happiness or misery is now—and much I fear ever has been a matter of indifference to you.

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Cold and indifferent to your happiness or misery, Harry Bellmour! Is it possible you should, even for a moment, entertain fo injurious a fuspicion ?—Alas! youknow but little, very little, what pain, what ftruggles those cool and specious resolutions have cost me. -But tell me, Harry, should I be any longer worthy that esteem you honour me with, were I, convinced as I am of the impropriety of fuch an union, and of the different schemes your parents have in view, to encourage hopes fo contrary to their interest? You must, I am certain, you must approve my design, however unable I may be to accomplish it.

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Vol. I.

He

well assured the wished-for event was ab-

folutely impossible.

Thus, my dear Charlotte, ended our consultation. My affairs, you see, are brought to a kind of conclusion—and I am still to cherish this flatterer hope, without which life would indeed be a dreary prospect.

Adieu, you shall hear from me when I return from our visit at the Hall.

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Your's,

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LETTER IX.

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To the SAME.

TE are returned from our visit, Charlotte, and a very agreeable one it was, but as I am at present at some loss for a subject to fill up my paper, I will be a little more particular in my account of it, and thereby not only oblige myfelf, but you, who, I know, are fond of having a minute detail of these affairs, however trifling; a very fortunate circumstance for me, who am so far removed from the busy scenes of life, and who meets fo very feldom with any incidents worth relating. You may believe my present subject does not abound with any very marvellous or extraordinary adventures, nor is my genius at this time fo bright, as I could, for your fake, defire, or I would endeavour to ornament my discourse with a few florid descriptions of D 2 who.

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who, and what I faw, but they, Charlotte, as well as you, must pardon me, if I, for this once at least, treat neither as they deferve. M A 2 on eT

The day was delightful, though rather warm, and I rejoiced not a little for that reason, as well as for the more material one of dress, that I did not ride. I had made choice of one not altogether unbecoming, if I might judge by the eyes of him, who, with inimitable grace, led me to the chaife. A thousand civil things were faid in praise of my taste, while he, to confirm the pleasing flattery, gently pressed my hand .- Could I doubt their fincerity thus attested?—We drove off. Charlotte, accompanied by our faid Harry, who that day looked-but be thankful. that I can neither describe, nor you imagine, how.cathe a so should warm view yes

We found Mr. and Mrs. Jones alone, the ladies and their brothers being in the garden, which, except those of the caftle, is the most extensive and beautiful of any

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in the country. Harry proposed my joining them, and offered to conduct me in the search. Mrs. Jones begged I would, as she was sure it would give them great pleasure, adding the day was too sine to be wasted in the house, by those who were able to enjoy it abroad, but imagined a little rest to Mrs. Bellmour would be more agreeable, after her journey, though no very long one.

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This point settled, with proper form and decorum, I, with no small pleasure, put myself under the protection of my swain, in order to begin our search; the time we spent therein, was, you may perhaps guess, not the least agreeable of the day, nor did my guide seem very solicitous to succeed in our design.

As we walked, he, amongst a thoufand other questions, most of which I thought infinitely more interesting and agreeable, asked me my opinion of the young gentlemen, particularly what I thought of the Colonel, who was so very

D 3

great

great a beau, and confequently a favourite with the ladies. I affured him that alone was but a very fmall recommendation to me, whatever it might be to others of my fex, fince the idea I had formed of that character, was none of the most advantageous. Of the two, Charles, faid I, was ever my favourite, for which preference he is indebted to you, who have given me frequently fo amiable an account of him. He appeared perfectly fenfible of the compliment I had paid his judgment, and was going to express it in his usual engaging manner, when we discovered our friends just entering the walk in which we were. He was evidently disappointed in fomething he was going to fay, and had only time, with a most expressive look, to beg I would remember our conversation in the library .- I, fmiling, affured him it ad made too deep an impression on my memory, to be effaced by any I was likely to be engaged in there. - My hand received

MISS CLARISSA B-: 55

his thanks, which he gently pressed, as he presented me to the ladies.

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After the usual civilities were performed on all sides, and declaring that the day was enchantingly pleasant, we agreed, with one consent, to continue our walk till dinner.

And now, Charlotte, shall I tell you what I think of this flaming Colonel, who, you know, was a few days fince destined to the amazing felicity of fupplying that place in my heart, which the banished Harry had left vacant?-Why, really, my dear, I am afraid he will never do-in my opinion I mean-for he, I fancy, would think very differently on the occafion-fo intolerably convinced of his perfections, fo perfectly fatisfied with those charms which nature has bestowed upon him, that there is no bearing him. He takes it for granted, that to fee-and admire (where he is the object) are fynonymous terms-but he must pardon my want of discernment if, in this instance, D 4 I think

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tion;

Miss Jones you have seen. She is undoubtedly a fine showey woman, both in person and manner—so easy—so degagée—intimate with Harry in an instant—she had, in a sew moments, conveyed him through all the delightful scenes of her dear London, on which subject she talks in raptures. But Fanny is, and ever was, my favourite, and, no wonder, since she is just her brother Charles, while her gay, and lively sister persectly resembles the Colonel. She seemed charmed with Harry, and left nothing unsaid, I believe, that she thought likely to engage his attention

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tion;—while the Colonel was displaying his eloquence to me, for the same purpose. How she might succeed heaven knows, but as for her brother, I am sorry to say it, Charlotte, he had but little reason to boast.—There is something so intolerably forward and assuming in his manner—so free—so—in short, I don't exactly know what, but, in spite of his good breeding, and the profusion of slaming compliments he thought proper to honour me with,—I do not like him, Charlotte.

After walking in this gay and gallant manner, till I was half tired, both with that and my companion, we were at last summoned to join the graver society in the dining-room.—I obeyed, you may believe, with pleasure; Miss Jones, on the contrary, seemed much more disposed to continue our excursion.—I am not absolutely certain whether that prodigious intimacy that was commenced between her and her spark, might not, in some mea-

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fure, contribute to fatigue me.—A droll reason this, you will say.—But things will affect one very oddly sometimes you know.—Though, after all, the assiduity he paid her was no more than good breeding required, in return for all that she so generously bestowed on him.

After dinner, Mr. Jones proposed singing, according to the custom on these occasions, which, between you and I, Charlotte, I think a very ridiculous one, unless any particular person in company happens to excel in that accomplishment; for what can be more inlipid and tirefome, than to fit and hear a fong laboured forth, without either voice, tafte, or judgment? I protest I think it is requiring a very mortifying proof of one's complaisance to infift on our doing what nature has denied us talents for .-- You must have been witness to this a thousand times, for where there is one good voice there are, at leaft, twenty bad ones .- But all must fing, whether well or ill-happily for us at this time,

time, however, there were fome very tolerable voices in company.

Miss Fanny is a perfect nightingale, Miss Jones acccompanied her on the harpfichord. You have heard me chant fo often, that I need not dwell very long on the harmony I favoured them with.—Applause followed, of course.—The Colonel declared he was a loft man from that moment-for my part I always thought him fo. He, as did the rest of the gentlemen, when called upon, excufed himself, affuring me he should never again endure. to hear any voice, however celebrated or admired, much less his own. He is particularly bleffed with the grace of humility, Charlotte-and a very amiable grace it is, you know. Thus ended the day.

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Mrs. Bellmour begged Mrs. Jones would allow the young ladies to come and spend a few days at B—. I added a word or two on the pleasure, happiness, and so forth, I should receive from her compliance.—It was granted, and I am in

daily expectation of that favour—and now my dear friend must excuse me if I end this epistle, as I am most intolerably tired with this unimportant history.—Adieu believe me ever yours.

CLARISSA B-

LETTER X.

A. Lander or other residence and Tremomental publication

To the SAME.

I CONFESS, Charlotte, your reproof is too just—and yet, I think, I can give a very tolerable reason for my apparent idleness—this then is my apology. We have, for this fortnight past, been paying and receiving visits. It is now the season for it, amongst those good solks who live at three or four miles distance, which most of our acquaintance do, you know. Many concurring circumstances are necessary in that case to enable the good ladies to have a little chat with each other, viz.—good roads—good weather—

weather—good horses—and good will— No wonder they do not oftner meet.

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I am forry to say it, Charlotte, but, nor withstanding all the bright things that must have passed during all this gaiety, I cannot recollect one circumstance worth relating. What ingratitude had I near been guilty of!

—I had almost forgot to tell you that the delicate 'Squire Warren is come to pay a visit to his family, and was pleased to honour me with some amazingly sine speeches, neat as imported from London. These gay sparks, I fancy, look upon me as a very sit person to practice their gallantry upon, that their genius for it should not contract any rust, while confined to the dreary, dismal country.

What he faid was so exceedingly soft—and silly—that I could not, in reason, suppose he meant I should set any sort of value on it, but meerly give him leave to repeat the words stames—darts—charming creature—killing eyes—and, in short, the whole list, as I said before, meerly to prevent

prevent his losing any of the number. According to this supposition it was I heard them, and the dear creature feemed perfectly fatisfied both with himfelf and me.—He is foon to fet out on his travels to complete his education-what a charming coxcomb will he be at his return!-Heaven defend me, Charlotte, from the power of his eloquence, after that event! -His good family look upon him, even now, as a prodigy of wit and fpirit, and as the contrary opinion would make no alteration in the youth, it is as well they should be deceived as not. Thus I have partly accounted for my filence, which I hope you will allow is no very bad ex-I wish what remains was of as incufe. different a nature.

I have, to vary the scene, Charlotte, been a nurse as well as a fine lady, since my last.—My poor nurse Sarah has been at the point of death, and as she has ever loved me with the tenderness of a mother, you may believe I could not see her in that

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that condition with indifference. It is impossible to express her grief at the thoughts of leaving me in the uncertainty I am in, with regard to my parents.— She only prays for life to see me settled as I deserve, and she would then die in peace. The good creature is convinced I shall yet be happy and acknowledged by friends and relations, who will restore me to that rank I merit, and to which, she is persuaded, I was born. Of all these stattering hopes she speaks with such considence, that, in spite of sober reason and probability, my foolish heart never fails to receive pleasure from her kind predictions.

I am rewarded for my care, by the profpect of her speedy recovery. She has already been able to walk from her cottage to our house, which, though scarce an hundred yards, I once feared the good soul would never enter again. She is a favourite of yours, Charlotte, you will, therefore, the more readily pardon my dwelling on so very unentertaining a subject.—But I forget—it is the second and last part of the apology I promised, and fuch as you cannot in conscience object to, unless you are very implacable indeed.

What shall I add more?—A letter confifting of apologies only, would, I fear, require another on the fame subjectand yet, I am much afraid, this will contain little elfe, as my imagination is at this time rather in a dull mood, nor can you wonder, confidering the employment I have fo lately been engaged in; should I attempt to lengthen it, I have some reafon to believe it would be too much in the affectuous strain to please your taste, and I would rather incur the censure of stupidity for this once, than, by continuing my epistle, give you the vapours .--Adieu, my dear girl, believe me yours.

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Clarissa B-.

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LETTER XL

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To the SAME.

HAVE just stolen up a moment from my vifitors to tell you they have been here a week, and to continue another, after which I am to accompany them home for a few days-more it shall not be, as I would on no confideration leave my dear Mrs. Bellmour too long alone, though she kindly insists upon my not lofing a moment's pleasure on her acount. -None of your fmiles, Charlotte, it is positively on her account only, that I am thus considerate—so you are, for this once, my dear friend, with all your fagacity, deceived.

My time has been spent very agreeably fince the Miss Jones's have been with us. Fanny is, like me, fond of early rifing, and we have had many delightful rambles before the rest of the family were afsembled. She is a most amiable girl, and

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feems much more calculated for a country than a town life, though she has been there as much as her fifter. - Their tempers. and inclinations are perfectly different.-Miss Jones talks in raptures of routs, balls, plays, Ranelagh, and a thousand other enchanting things and places, of which, she fays, I can have no idea, who am for ever buried in the stupid country. She dies at the thoughts of the fummer feafon, which cuftom has dedicated to that dreary place, and yet adds, London is, in those dreadful months, almost as bad, nay, if possible, worse, since it is then deferted by all that company whose presence contributes so greatly to render it delightful; -and very emphatically laments, that it cannot be always winter there—and, if we chose it, summer in this fame country, of which we are so enamoured.

Fanny, on the contrary, is charmed with every rural amusement. Walkingriding-fishing-in short, one can propole

MISS CLARISSA B-. 67

pose no exercise the country affords, but what gives her pleasure. These we take in their turn, and when disposed to pass an hour or two at home, she entertains us with her voice, which is inexpressibly musical and soft.

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I have given up the guittar, Charlotte, of which, I was so amazingly fond, when you was here, and have again taken the harpfichord into favour. Iown, I think my inconftancy on this occasion is pardonable, as my lovely mafter, to encourage my perfeverance, declares I make a furprifing progress-but can I fail, do you think, with fuch a teacher, and fo fweetly commended?—He—when we can fo long retain him amongst us, which by the way is not quite so often as one of our party feems to desire-fometimes entertains us with a lesson on that instrument; but to do him justice, he is not over fond of making a parade about this or any other accomplishment he has.

I had once some thoughts that a match was intended—by the parents I mean between Miss Jones and him, and, with no small reason, believe the fair one might be prevailed on to do him that honour; but I am now perfuaded I have been deceived, or else he makes a most wonder. ful cool and indifferent lover, for he has been less at home fince they have been here, than ever he used to be.-Not the most favourable symptom, you will allow, if they have any fuch defign.

Miss Jones, in her free and easy way, frequently takes him to task for his want of gallantry, in thus leaving home, when honoured with fuch guests .- But then his apologies are so elegant, the forrow he expresses for being unfortunately obliged so often to deprive himself of the joy he should receive from company so infinitely agreeable, fo delicately, fo feelingly defcribed, that one is rather inclined to pity bim than one's felf .- O, these men, Charnominal lotte,

Miss CLARISSA B-. 69

lotte, how natural to their infinuating tongue is flattery!—And who ever was master of so much beautiful language, to render it agreeable, as Harry Bellmour!

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He has just left us, to go for a day or two with a party to the races at M——. Two of his friends called on him here, the one young Beville, the other, your favourite, Charles Mackenzie—he was quite shocked to find you had left us.— Not quite civil to tell us so, however.— He is as handsome and wild as ever, and, consequently, as worthy your admiration—without which, indeed, he declares life would be absolutely insupportable—this moving declaration from bim is really diverting, you know, as he is so very much inclined to dying and despair.

I told him, I fancied a youth of his sprightly genius, would be able to support even that affliction, great as it would certainly be, were it possible to happen; an event, however, not in the least probable, as long as you continued the per-

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fon of taste and judgment you ever was.

—He bowed—as I hope you will, for the civility of my speech on both sides.

He declared his purpose was almost changed, since he had joined our agreeable party, and assured us, if we would permit him to supply the place of his friend Harry, he would give up even the races, to enjoy that felicity.

What, in spite of Miss Brudnell's absence? said I; but, however, we will not mortify you, by accepting your offer, though you half deserve it, for the insincerity of your compliments. Harry declared against it, fearing, he said, his company would appear to great disadvantage, after we had enjoyed that of so accomplished a gentleman as his friend Charles, and doubted, whether we should be willing to re-instate him again, on demand, were he inclined to indulge our inclinations.—Nothing like a becoming humility.—After a thousand speeches, equally sincere on all

fides, they took leave and left us to more fober and ferious conversation.

Miss Jones declares Harry is an angel, and insists on Mr. Bellmour's sending him to town this winter, and has promised to take the care of him upon herself.

Adieu, Charlotte, I have already staid longer from my company than civility permits. Farewel, if I have a moment's time, I will write to you again before I leave B—.

Your's, to seed of other

CLARA B-

LETTER XIL

To the SAME.

THAVE only time for a few lines—
the chaife is ordered for our little journey, and Harry ready to attend us. He
returned but yesterday, notwithstanding
the violent pain of absence—but these
men are great philosophers, Charlotte.

72 THE HISTORY OF

Miss Jones immediately called him to account for his amazing rudeness, and affured him he should give evident proofs of amendment, before she would again honour him with her company. She told him Mr. Bellmour had given her leave to take him to town with her for the winter, which she now saw was absolutely necessary, in order to teach him a little more gallantry and good breeding.

He feared, he faid, he should not be able to repent of his fault, fince it had procured him fo great a felicity as that of being taken under her care and tuition, from whose instructions he could not fail to improve; but begged she would not fo long delay the honour fhe intended him, but begin immediately, as those lectures she meant to bestow upon him, would ferve to amuse her, while confined to the tirefome and infipid country, and also prepare him to appear in that gay place with less rusticity than he could posfibly do, if denied that favour.—Begin then ALL ST

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MISS CLARISSA B-. 73

then, my fair tutoress, said he, whenever you please, and, be assured, I am ready to learn whatever you will deign to teach me.

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He added a few more speeches of the same kind, by way of beginning his reformation, and thus engaged I lest them, to come and bid you farewell.—I may, perhaps, find time, while at the hall, to send you a line or two, if any thing violently entertaining should happen during my visit.—I am called.—So, my dear girl, Adieu.

CLARA B-

LETTER XIII.

To the SAME.

Othing but balls and diversions here, Charlotte, and such a multitude of smart fellows, that I am absolutely at a loss where to six my choice.—If Harry must be run away with, in spite of himself, Vol. I.

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and I vow I think him in no small danger, I shall be at no loss for one to succeed him, as I have hearts at my devotion, of all forts and sizes.

The Colonel is my flave, to all intents and purposes; tho' not the most humble. I must confess, whatever he is pleased to fay to the contrary.—In my opinion, a few lectures would be more necessary here than on his friend. I shall never be reconciled to his manner, however graceful he may think it. His eyes, which are really very tolerable, if properly used, are yet frightful to me, as he has taught them to look. He no doubt means they should be expressive, and, to do them justice, they are perfectly so, but I cannot bear their language. They are totally spoiled, Charlotte, by the free education he has given them. They continually contradict any delicate fentiment he may now and then, by accident, utter, and plainly declare his thoughts and ideas are not fo refined as his tongue would persuade us.

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Yesterday was the anniversary of Mr. Jones's wedding-day, who has ever found that yoke so light and easy, that, in honour of it, he never fails to celebrate its return with mirth and galety.

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us. terThey have an admirable ball-room, which was very agreeably filled. We danced fixteen couple. Every thing was, you may believe, done with great tafte, as Mrs. Jones piques herfelf not a little on giving the most elegant entertainments of any Lady in the country.—But excuse me, Charlotte, if I do not give you a particular description of it.—The ball may, indeed, claim a few lines, and shall accordingly be indulged.

Mr. Jones began the minuets with a Lady who had a daughter there, a good fine girl—and, confidering they had neither of them had a lesson for some few years, they really performed with no bad grace. The Colonel immediately came, and begged the honour of my hand, which having taken, he gently pressed, a circumstance never omitted on such occa-

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fions.

fions. He led me up the room, whifpering as we went, that I looked divinely.
—Could I dance ill after this affurance?
When we had performed our part of
the ceremony, he declared there wanted
only this to fix him mine for ever; he was
now convinced I excelled in every elegant
accomplishment.—True, or false, you'll
allow it was a flourishing speech.

Harry then—and, oh, heavens, Charlotte, what an angelick, what an elegant figure did he at that moment appear!—Not a face but was animated with the hopes of being taken out by the lovely youth.—I too had my flutters—but we have ever been looked on so much as brother and sister, that it would have been absolutely out of character for us to dance together.—How much did he seem to regret this ridiculous notion!

Harry, I say, with inimitable grace, and a manner peculiar to himself, led forth the delighted Miss Jones.—Civility required this, you know; and as if to convince me he meant no more, he next took

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out Miss Fanny.—They both dance admirably—but could they fail with such a partner?

Every eye, old and young, was fixed upon him with visible marks of pleasure, while he, perfectly easy, seemed quite unconscious of his evident superiority.

Country dances at last brought us more upon a level.—Here every one appeared to less disadvantage, as not being so much exposed as when figuring only by pairs in a duet.

Miss Jones was again happy, and that too for the whole evening.—Shall I confess that I felt some emotions very like those of envy? True, I did—but then I consoled myself with this reflection that if she could have guessed the sentiments of her partner's heart, she would have had but small cause to triumph.—Triumph! I cannot suppose she did—over me in particular, I mean— as I dare say it never once entered her imagination, that the lovely Harry Bellmour could ever think seriously

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of a girl circumstanced as I unfortunately am .-- But for this belief, fhe must have observed that amiable and engaging attention he continually pays to every word I utter; but she is blind to all, however conspicuous.

We did not break up till daylight, when most of the company went home, and the rest left us this morning, except Harry, who is to stay a day or two, that that we may not too fuddenly return into folitude after our late gaiety.-He then is to take his leave. The Colonel and Charles are also to be absent for a few days, to their unspeakable grief, you may imagine.

Adieu, my dear Charlotte, if I should continue writing, I verily believe I should drop afleep, as I have not had half enough to recover me after my last night's fatigue, having denied myself that refreshment that I might, while most of the family are still enjoying that fatisfaction, indulge myfinal relation of the remaind of felf

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MISS CLARISSA B-. 79

felf in one infinitely more agreeable--that of writing to my friend.--Adieu.

Your's, fincerely, CLARISSA B-.

LETTER XIV.

To the SAME

AM afraid, my dear Charlotte, you will not be very highly entertained with the epiftle you are going to receive, as I never in my life was in a more melancholy difposition. My spirits are intolerably low, in spite of all my efforts. Did you never find this difagreeable confequence follow your having been particularly gay and lively? It must be the hurry and fatigue of the ball, that has left this langour upon me, which at prefent I find it impossible to conquer .-- Harry Bellmour and his friends have just left us. -It cannot be this, Charlotte, which affects me, as their going was not unexpect-E 4 ed: ed; it therefore, you know, cannot be owing to that—but no matter what is the cause, let me rather endeavour to divert than puzzle myself with what is of no consequence.

I believe my ftay here will be longer than I at first imagined, as the ladies will not allow me to mention my return. Mrs-Jones obligingly fays my fituation is too folitary at B-, for one of my age, and whose disposition is naturally so grave and thoughtful. But tell me, Charlotte, have I not too much reason for this gravity, this ferious temper?-Not that I think it is my natural turn, had I been happily circumstanced, but in the midst of scenes that give joy and pleafure to every other heart, I am tormented with a thousand anxious fears that damp my fpirits—they have never yet had liberty to exert themfelves, ever depressed as they have been from my birth.—Sure it cannot be envy that causes in me these grave, these useless reflections!—If I know my own heart,

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I cannot be pained that I see others happy and content, ever enjoying with delight those amusements and diversions that, to me, are barely tolerable, and too often insipid.—Tell me, my dear friend, if ever you discovered in that heart even the least appearance of a vice so dreadful. You know its every sentiment—examine it—deal freely with me, I beseech you.

O, no, my dear Charlotte, it cannot be, my heart furely would not harbour fentiments so mean and selfish.—Is it not rather the dreadful remembrance of my wretched birth, my miserable uncertainty, that with too much reason will sometimes, in spite of all my efforts, torment my imagination with cruel and anxious reflections?—Is it possible I should, situated as I am, be intirely free from them, and happy as those who are blessed with fond, indulgent parents, with tender friends and relations, whose study it constantly is to render their lives one continued scene of chearfulness and felicity?

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I know my Charlotte will not forgive me this dreary present—but spare melet me indulge fometimes this melancholy, mortifying subject. It teaches me humility, and will preferve me from being too much elated with the unmeaning praifes and flattery that I am, at some moments, tempted with, which, however unmeaning or unmerited, gain but too easy belief. Yes, my dear friend, let me, by this means, in fome measure, turn my misfortunes into a bleffing.-Pardon me then, I intreat you, and be affured it shall be the last of these disconsolate epistles you shall—if I can possibly prevent it-ever receive.-I have, by indulging myself in this, relieved my breast from a load of woe that, remaining there, would have made me miferable company to the the family who fo obligingly detain me here.

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It is particularly kind, you'll fay, to vent my spleen and disagreeable humours on you, and will perhaps tell me, if this is the only distinction a friend is to be honoured noured with, you will beg leave to refign that character.

This reproof, I am very sensible, would be but too just, Charlotte, but remember my promise of amendment, and let that condescension plead in my favour.

Adieu, my dear girl, write to me, and, by that agreeable means, convince me my apology is favourably received.

CLARISSA B-

LETTER XV.

To the SAME.

PORGIVE me, my dear Charlotte, that I have not till now, answered your obliging, and very entertaining favour. Mrs. Bellmour has been ill.—I found her, on my return to B—, far from well. My attendance on her has prevented my writing before. She is now, to my very sincere joy, perfectly recovered.

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The Miss Jones's expressed great regret for my leaving them, and declared, the

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time

time I had been with them, was the most agreeable they had, or were likely to receive, during their stay in the country. The Colonel too has received orders to march, he is obliged to join his regiment in London as soon as possible. This will deprive his family of great pleasure, as he is evidently the favourite—at least with Miss Jones, who very sincerely laments that his commander did not include her in the summons. He certainly adds not a little to their gaiety, not only by his own company, but by that of the many gentlemen who are continually calling upon him there.

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Miss Jones, in her agreeable, easy way, insisted on my promise that I would, immediatly on my arrival, dispatch Harry to the Hall, to supply my place, adding she knew no one, either male or female, able to repair the loss they should sustain by my absence, but him.—Very civil to both, you'll allow. I could, you may believe, make no objections to a demand so very reason-

reasonable, and have, accordingly, delivered my message in form; but, would you believe it, Charlotte? The creature has not the gratitude to die with joy on so stattering an occasion—nay, I blush to inform you—he will, I greatly fear, refuse to accept the offered felicity.

Mrs. Bellmour has fent to beg I will accompany her. She is going to take an airing, for an hour or two. Will you, Charlotte, on this confideration, without murmuring, accept this pigmy epiftle?—Delays are dangerous, or I would not finish it till my return—and who knows when I may again have an opportunity to practice that very wife and prudent maxim! Farewel, believe me your's.

CLARISSA B-

LETTER XVI.

To the SAME

TEAVENS! Charlotte, what a letter! But read, and tell me if I have not now a charming opportunity to be the heroine of some notable adventure? for that it is wrote with some such design, I think you will no more doubt than I do. —I have taken the trouble to copy it that you may lose none of its beauties.-I hope you will allow it is a most tender and moving epiftle, though I believe it will not have eloquence fufficient to move me from B— It was brought me this morning - but for what purpose heaven only knows-though that it is not for that it would perfuade me, I am most certain; --- for were I really so blessed as to have a mother living, a mother too fo amazingly paffionate and tender, would fhe, do you think, expect or defire I should follow to blind a guide and invitation? -No, Charlotte, the deceit is too glaring-

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ing—any other scheme would have been more likely to succeed—but my unhappy circumstances—which alone subject me to such impertinent liberties—no doubt inspired the writer with this very bright

thought.

You may believe I am not a little defirous to penetrate this mystery, though I have not curiofity enough to go in person to discover it .- I am determined to consult no one in the affair but Harry, who is perfectly able to advise, and no one more willing to preferve me from any fnare that may be laid .- Not that I am inclined to think this any more than a piece of witfor wit, Charlotte, is frequently intended to be displayed in things of this fortthough I own I think one can be a much better judge of it when expressed by words than actions—but this indeed is not fo generally in every person's power, whereas nothing can be more eafy than the other. -I am, however, determined by fome means to know the truth, and who is the author

author of this eloquent billet-doux, as well as of the purpose and design of the writer in taking this trouble; for after all, fomething must be meant, as here is a chaife in waiting, as the messenger tells me, at the little ale-house, about a quarter of a mile from the park wall.-What a pity we have no better inn for the scene of so good a plot!-You know the house I mean, Charlotte.-Indeed you cannot very well miftake, as it is the only emblem of a tavern B— is honoured with.

Adieu, I hear Harry is come in, I will go and confult him. You shall know on what we refolve.

CLARISSA B-

The enclosed Letter.

THAT happy day is at last arrived when the fondest, tenderest of parents, may acknowledge her long loft, long lamented child .- O, my amiable, my fweet Clarissa! what words can paint to

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to you the rapturous joys of your fond, your doating mother?-Yes, my dearest creature, it is your mother who addresses you, who longs to fold you to her beating heart.-Fly to me-bless me with your presence, and recompence me for that world of mifery I have endured for my forfaken child.—Bleffed be that kind Providence who has thus preferved you, thus raised you friends when I could not befriend you.-Though ignorant of me, my Clara, I have ever known your fate, and daily prayed for your generous protectors, to whom I long to offer my most grateful acknowledgments; but time is yet required before I can enjoy that fatiffaction, nor can I now openly demand my beloved daughter; but, furely, the will not scruple to follow the guide I have sent, who is the confident of all my misfortune, and who has orders to conduct you to the arms of her who dies with impatience to fold you to her heart, though obliged by circumstances, of which I long to inform

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form you, to abandon, for a while, my child; and, ah! how very tedious has that time appeared !- I yet had fome degree of confolation from the knowledge of that protection you had found, and have with rapture beheld your growing beauty, and transported heard your praise from every tongue. But let me not lose the precious moments.--Come to me---bless me with your company for one day .--- The happy time is not far diftant when I shall be permitted to demand you in form, and pay that respect your worthy guardians so justly merit. 'Till then you shall again return to their kind protection .-- Come then, my loved, much loved daughter, and bless the fond expecting mother who adores you. and and analysish bevoted

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LETTER XVII.

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To Miss Charlotte Brudnell.

WELL, Charlotte, you are no doubt dying with impatience to know what we have resolved upon, and whether I have yet indulged my expecting mother with one tender embrace.—No, my dear, but I am going to grant her that favour by proxy.—Do you comprehend my meaning, Charlotte?—Lest you should not (excuse me for doubting your penetration) I will be a little more explicit, and hope you will allow my scheme to be full as witty as hers.

Harry, when I first disclosed this wonderful affair to him, was rather inclined to be grave upon it.—He slew, Charlotte, into a rage—not at me, take that knowledge with you,—but at the vile author of so impertinent a scheme—for he at once declared it was some villanous design, and

and but for my entreaties, and those made too with all the eloquence I was endued with, would that instant have set off in quest of this pretended mother, and introduced a fon to her who would not have been quite so meek and gentle as the amiable daughter she so fondly expects .---Yes, Charlotte, this gentle, amiable Harry can, I find, be passionate on more occafions than one .-- Heavens! how he raved! --- I was obliged to be amazingly foft and condescending, in order to calm and sooth him. I affure you my fmiles were put to no imall trial. I succeeded at last, and perfuaded him to look upon it as a trifle, and begged he would treat it only as fuch; and, on condition he would promife me to think of it meerly as a joke, I would inform him of a scheme I had planned that would really render it not a bad one .------ He with some difficulty agreed to humour me, and, as a token of his fincerity, he kiffed the hand I voluntarily held out to him. In the the small row in houses

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What could I do, Charlotte? I was obliged to grant him this prodigious favour, to ensure his approbation of my plan.

---Now listen, and you shall be informed what that is.

I told you long fince, I believe, that my good friend Sarah was perfectly recovered .-- Was there ever fuch a transition! you cry; from fo interesting a subject to tell me that an old woman is recovered from fickness! How can you, Clara, be fo ridiculous? This, I suppose, is some of the wit you mention. Stop, my dear girl, do not condemn me before you are let a little farther into the thread of my narrative; that old lady is not fo very foreign to my subject as you may imagine; she, child, is to be the proxy I mentioned. Yes, Charlotte, this is the time, or never, that I am to reward her for all her faithful fervices; her fortune shall now be made. She--even good old Sarah, shall go---for I have got her confent---and receive all that profusion of tenderness, all those

those endearing embraces which await your friend. My good mamma may perhaps be a little disappointed in the idea the had formed of my amazing beauty. and fo forth--but she is, no doubt, bleffed with too much good sense to be greatly hurt by a loss so trifling as the want of that fading perfection .- - Really, except that, and her being indeed rather older than could be wished, she is a very comely person, and I dare say, some forty years fince, might have had her admirers not a few .-- To be fure, in that time, though trifling, some little alteration must have happened—but what is this in the opinion of a discreet woman, as I am convinced my dear mamma is? and as for the beauties of her mind, I am much deceived if they are not infinitely more valuable than her own. nices, that I was to recen

How do you approve my scheme? By this means I shall be fully informed of what I wish to know, and the disappointment the person (whoever it is) will receive, Shair

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ceive, in meeting, after all their trouble and racked invention, fo venerable a perfonage, instead of this fo eagerly defired blooming daughter, will beno finall entertainment. In the mean time, are you inclined to laugh with me at the furprise they will be in when the good lady defcends from the carriage, and with looks of love and impatience flies to embrace her long loft parent? I am afraid the flying part will be but hobblingly performed; but no matter, she will, no doubt, be met more than half way by her faid mother. She is very thin, the only circumstance, I must own, she in the least refembles me in; but this will do, disguised, or rather ornamented as she is to be with my bonnet, cloak, &c. &c. Had fhe been plump and well-favoured, as most of her profession are, it would have been a more difficult matter to make her pass upon her faithful guide for his fair charge. I have promifed him to be ready at the place appointed early to-morrow morning, but muffled

muffled up, left I should be observed by any of the family, who would, I feared, not fuffer me to indulge my eager curiofity to fee my dear parent. And as for Sarah, she would undertake a much longer journey, or any other business to serve her dear child. She too raves like Harry, at the liberty taken with her Clara, and feems even more, if possible, than us convinced it is some base design. There can no bad consequence happen to her from her expedition, on the contrary, I hope this little journey will do her good, as she has lately been ill. The man informs me, I shall be only that one day on the road, as it is not above thirty miles diftant. Our meeting being a fecret to the family, I durst not take time to ask him many questions, nor would he answer any others, I suppose, than he had orders for, if I had. When Sarah has made this agreeable visit, and settled the particulars relating to her being demanded of her guardians in form, and in short indulged her

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her dear mamma's impatient curiofity, the good lady may return at her leifure to her own peaceful habitation, where her company will be as eagerly wished for by me, as it is at present by the other. This, Charlotte, is my scheme, and I really think no bad on. To-morrow morning she begins her travels.

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I had once fome thoughts of fending our Susan instead of her, but dropped that defign the next moment, as in that case Mrs. Bellmour must have been made acquainted with our plan, which I thought not fo proper; and I also considerd that the could not fo well carry it on as Sarah, who, you know, has in her youth feen fomething of the world, and can really converse very decently, and in a stile above the common, but what chiefly determined me was her age, which would ferure her from any infult that Sufan, who is young and not difagreeable, might have been liable to, if it is really so vile a purpose as Sarah insists upon it is.

Yol. I. F I am

I am fent for, Charlotte, Mrs. Stuart and her daughters are below, though if I had not been interrupted, this letter, at least for want of length, would require no apology.

Adieu, you shall have the sequel of this adventure as foon as I am acquainted with it myself.

CLARISSA B ...

LETTER XVIII. To the SAME.

TELL me, Charlotte, what can be fo intolerably infipid as these visits of mere form and ceremony?—I protest. I know no one thing in life fo perfectly difagreeable. The ladies I found below were of that number who make it a rule to pay their compliments to Mrs. Bellmour once a year. They always spend the winter in town. Never were there. three fuch trifling infipid fouls, furely, as this good lady and her daughters—its. dif-

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difficult to fay which is the most so of the three. With fan in hand (which they kept in one constant, regular flutter) they fat as prim as those venerable old pictures you have so often been diverted with in the hall at the castle; and what was still more distressing for us whose business it was, at all events, to keep up a continual fubject of conversation, they were almost as dumb. Think, Charlotte, how my brain must have been racked. Had you happened, at that moment, to step in, you would undoubtedly have believed Mrs. Bellmour and myself were taking them feverally to task for some dreadful offence, as all the part they bore in our dialogue was just to answer-yes-or no -and even these harmless monosyllables were extorted with no fmall difficulty. You may believe we ran through an innumerable multitude of important queftions during their stay; for every subject we started was in a moment destroyed. either by this same yes, or no, or, I really F 2 don't

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don't know.—It was absolutely satiguing to the last degree to spin out as much as was necessary to prevent a total silence. For my part, I think it would be doing an acceptable piece of service to write down, at ones leisure, a few dialogues on different subjects, no great matter what, and, whenever it is ones missfortune to have any such tiresome visitors fall in ones way, to present each of them with a copy, from whence, with a tolerable grace, they may read their several parts, and by this means save themselves and others a world of trouble.

What, Charlotte, do you think can tempt these good souls to travel every winter up to London? I protest I can imagine no one thing either there or any where else, that is likely to give them the smallest pleasure; they seem just to breathe, and that is all they know of life. How it came ever to be said that our sex is so violently prone to talk, I cannot conceive, for I have sive times out of six seen the

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MISS CLARISSA B-

contrary verified to a most tiresome degree. I know not what fluency of tongue may have flourished in the days of our great grandmothers; but I declare, for my own part, in the few visits I make, or receive, that of keeping up an agreeable, fprightly conversation—nay indeed any feems, in general, an affair of the utmost difficulty.

If I did not fear that you would tell me I am ever raising imaginary troubles to torment myself, I would just mention an observation I have within these few days made, that gives me inexpressible uneafiness. I am convinced, Charlotte, what I am going to fay is most certainly true.

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Mrs. Bellmour has, I am perfuaded, discovered her son's partiality for me, and never fails to appear visibly displeased, when he shews that assiduity and tenderness with which, indeed, he has ever treated me, but of which she seems to have taken no notice, till within this week or fort-

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fortnight. A cloud instantly overspreads her countenance on every fuch occasion; The is no longer pleased with the friendship he expresses for me, fearing, and indeed with too much reason, that it is not without a mixture of a more tender pasfion-a paffion that, I am fully perfuaded, would give her very great pain. Be affured I am not deceived; this is not owing to any vapours or low spirits, as you will be inclined to believe, but a too just reason I have to be positive in what I say. -And after all it is more furprifing to me that she did not make this discovery long before, than that fhe has made it now; for does not his every look, word, and action plainly declare the place I have in his amiable heart?—Heaven knows, Charlotte, what will be the confequence -fhould they forfake me; -but adieu-I will not encourage a thought fo dreadful.

I am all impatience for the return of my Embassadress. To-morrow will certainly

Miss CLARISSA B-. 103

tainly let us into the whole secret; till then farewell.

CLARA B-.

LETTER XIX.

To the SAME.

H! my dear Charlotte, what is the friendship of the world, what the honour of one half of those who profess to rank themselves in the number of our friends?—Good heavens! is it possible, that those who have endeavoured to perfuade us they wish nothing so much as our happiness, should, at the same time, be doing every thing in their power to destroy it for ever?—Yes, Charlotte, the man who pretended to value fo highly the approbation and esteem of me and my protectors—that man whose family have ever been on the most friendly and intimate footing with mine—that very man, my dear friend, had basely determined to imbitter their future days by robbing them

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of, and bringing to mifery and difgrace, their Clarissa; for such was the ignoble purpose, such would have been the unavoidable consequence of his vile scheme, had his artissice not been discovered.—But let me endeavour to give you some account of this ridiculous, ill concerted plot; a plot, however, I have no reason to regret.

No fooner had my intended guide received his fair damfel into the chaife, which he did without the least suspicion, than he drove off with the greatest precipitation, as if conscious of the vile project he was engaged in. Sarah very soon became a stranger to the road he had taken, and no wonder, as she is not much accustomed to take these kind of rambles. They stopped but once during the journey, nor was she then defired to alight from the chaise, but was offered a dish of chocolate, or what else she pleased, in it. They then proceeded with as much haste as before, and in the evening arrived a

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the place that was to discover this so well-contrived plot. It appeared to be a house belonging to some creditable farmer, a very decent elderly woman handed Sarah from the carriage, and with great civility led her into a neat little room, where, after offering to affish her in taking off her bonnet and cloak, which she, you may believe, thought proper to refuse, she lest her to rest, and compose herself, in order to see her, no doubt, impatient mother.

What would I give, Charlotte, that you could have heard this history in Sarah's own words! I affure you, it loses considerably by the change of language; but you must be content to take it as it is, since it would be in vain for me to attempt repeating all her embellishing phrases and sententious comments. You may, however, in some measure imagine her manner as well as stile, since you have frequently held many moral and instructive conversations with her.

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She often, in the course of her memoirs; exclaimed, Ah, my dear child, what will your dear friend Miss Brudnell say to this villainy?-Never-neverlet her again run on in-praise of these vile, these unchristian town rakes, as I have too often heard her do; fure she will for the future abhor their very name. Thus would fhe frequently interrupt her story to exclaim—and indeed too justly-against bringing up people's fons in that vile London, where nothing was to be be learnt but vice, and how to forget, as foon as possible, the few good instructions they may perhaps have got while under their parents care; but as I have not forgot how impertinent those annotations appeared to my impatience, I will spare you that mortification, and proceed to my flory in as few words as poffible, fince I cannot give it you in those of the heroine herself.

She declares, her heart almost died within her when left to herself, and owns she would have given worlds to have been as expeditiously conveyed back to her cotage as she had been transported where she was; but revived on considering how much more dreadful it would have been to me, had I been weak enough to have taken such a tour, than any thing that was likely to befall herself.

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Thus, for near an hour, had she leifure given her to muster up what little stock of courage she was possessed of, in order to support her in the expected interview. Her fears had raifed a thousand frightful ideas in her mind, which she endeavoured in vain to stifle, when the door opened, and, instead of the tender doating mother, presented to her astonished fight—guess, Charlotte, who it was that in an instant threw himself on his knees before her, and in a perfect extacy feized her gentle hand-yes, Charlotte, guess, if you can, with all your boafted fagacity, who this hero, this ingenious Knight-Errant was.—But, to keep you no longer in suspense, it was no other than the re-

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nowned,

Heavens! you cry, is it possible?—The friend, the companion of your Harry!—The man who has ever been treated with the kindness of a son by all your family!—Has he dared thus to violate every tie of friendship, honour, and respect?—Yes, my dear, he has indeed—even he. But what are these considerations to men of his exalted genius? Remember, Charlotte, I never liked him.—But why mention that?—This innocent frolick will surely not justify my prejudice; this was meerly to pass an hour or two for want of some other amusement, nothing more.

Now my fears are over let me indulge the inclination I, and I am fure you must feel, to laugh at the truly ridiculous figure my swain must have made when, instead of the soft white hand of your friend, he pressed the cold, withered and bony one of good old Sarah, who, to compleat his transport, with great gravity and composure, gently laid aside her veil,

and flood confessed-not, indeed, the lovely Clariffa-tho' a much more staid and venerable person, had he been wife enough to think fo - but her nurse. Heavens! my dear creature, how I enjoy the ridiculous idea! What a delightful picture would this make!-Oh, for the pencil of the inimitable Hogarth, to do justice to the comic scene!-Have you recovered your gravity, that I may raise my prostrate lover from his humble posture, and by one kind glance encourage his timid, honourable paffion?

Neither Sarah's words, by her own confession, nor much less mine, who did not fee it, can express the astonishment, rage, and visible shame that instantly appeared on the countenance of my disappointed beau—he even, for a moment, feemed much inclined to doubt his fenses, nor could eafily be perfuaded that all he faw was not a dream. - This venerable nymph, however, encouraged by the confusion she fawhim in, convinced him he was really and

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indeed awake, by afking him with great composure the cause of all that surprise he feemed to express, on seeing the person he had, with fo much trouble and fecrecy, ordered to be brought there? - and added, a more friendly, tho' less ceremonious reception, would indicate more true pleafure than all those violent transports he was pleafed to express for the honour she had done him-confessed, she was sensible how very far she had deviated from that prudent and referved conduct which her fex, and especially one of her tender age, ought to observe; but what would not the pleafing hopes of feeing a fond and impatient mother induce a young creature to do, who had for fo many years-till now-in vain fighed for that felicity !- I befeech you, Sir, inform her I am here, and, with all due respect, wait the happy moment when I may throw myfelf at her feet. He stamped and bit his lips most unmercifully, nor could utter one word diffinctly enough to be heard. One moment he would turn to her,

her, as if to threaten her with vengeance, but on feeing the reverend figure, drew back, ashamed of having been so abominably duped-then fly to the door, muttering fuch expressions as honest Sarah would not fo much as attempt to repeat. Thus, for an hour almost, did he traverse the room in agony, with shame at the thoughts, no doubt, of the striking figure he should make if ever this gallant adventure came to be known, and yet at a loss in what manner to prevent it, and at the same time get rid of his fair mistress.—It is natural to suppose these were the subjects of his meditations .- At last, weary with study, and unable to come to any immediate refolution, he, darting a look at the good old lady, which did not convey any very tender fen, timent, flung out of the room, as if in absolute despair, in what manner to dismiss her.

You may believe, the poor creature's heart felt no greater tranquility than his own; she endeavoured, however, to arm herself

herself with patience, persuaded that no very dreadful confequence would follow, fince it was evident shame was the chief passion that raged in his breast; she was rather puzzled how, or in what manner to get back to B-, but as she had been only a day on the road, imagined it could be at no very great diffance, and hoped to prevail on the good people of the house to procure her a carriage, she having no cause to conceal herself from their notice, as her age and venerable figure would certainly preserve her character from scandal in the visit she had made, however extraordinary it might appear in every other respect. She determined, which indeed was but civil, to leave the gallant Colonel the honour of explaining the mystery to them, in whatever manner he thought most agreeable.

Thus refolved, she very composedly waited the event, when a moment after a country looking girl entered, and with great gravity presented her a billet doux, which having done she retired, leaving the

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MISS CLARISSA B-. 113

fair lady to peruse the contents at her leisure.

How very fortunate it was, Charlotte, that the damfel could read, for what a mortifying circumstance it would have been, had the heroine of fuch an adventure discovered so dreadful a defect in her education!-But, luckily for her credit, she, with the help of her spectacles, made shift to conquer this difficulty. The purport of the billet was-after threatening her most unmercifully if she refused—to beg she would conceal this affair from her young mistress, at least as much of it as posfible, particularly that he was the person, and left her at liberty to name any other for the hero she pleased. -Very kind, you'll allow.—If she would comply with this request, he would, early the next morning, order her to be conveyed to the place where she was taken up, and also give her a purse that should amply reward her for the trouble of her journey. He added, he would himself come in half an hour

hour for her answer, and again hinted another kind of treatment, in case she refused. You may believe she was not over curious to try whether he would keep his word as to the menaces he so furiously mentioned, and was, therefore, ready to make peace on honourable terms, not a little pleased that her journey back again was one of those offered, though determined to make no promises which she could not perform.

He came, and made a figure infinitely more ridiculous than you can possibly imagine; attempted, though with a very bad grace, to make a joke of the affair; offeredher the money, which she, however, thought proper to reject with no small disdain, and only promised, diverting as it was, not to make the joke public. However droll the story might be to others, he left her but half pleased with it himself, telling her the chaise should be ready by six in the morning, and late as it then was, she saw him from the win-

dow mount his horse, and with a servant ride off, leaving her to spend the evening in whatever manner she pleased.

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Some moments after, the fame elderly person she first saw, and who she found was the mistress of the house, came and begged she would oblige them with her company at supper. She followed without hesitation, perfectly unconcerned at the conjectures they might form, being persuaded her beau must have made the most ridiculous sigure of the two.

She found a very decent man, who was master of the family, and from the behaviour of both, she concluded they were ignorant of the vile scheme the Colonel intended to have put in practice, and, therefore, imagined that place was only to have been my first stage, had I favoured him with my company. What story he might have invented she knew not, but no questions were asked concerning her visit, whatever they might conjecture. They conversed very sociably of indiffe-

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rent things till bed time, then told her the carriage would be ready in the morning, and conducted her to a neat little bed-chamber, where she reposed herself with great tranquility, without the least fear of being interrupted by the intrusion of her fwain.

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In the morning she again put herself under the protection of her old guide, who was, no doubt, much amazed at his master's taste in his amours, on discovering her to be so very reverend a sigure, for she now no longer concealed her beauties from him, as her romantic journey was so near concluded. She took a civil leave of the good people, and in due time was set down, after a very pleasant journey, at the place where she set off on her tour.

And thus, Charlotte, ended this delightful adventure, of which it is imposfible to form any idea sufficiently ridiculous. You may believe, I durst on no account discover to Harry who was the author

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ne or author of fo vile a scheme, convinced the consequence must be dreadful; I was therefore obliged to infift on Sarah's concealing his name, and affuring him the really did not know, nor had ever feen the person before. If ever an untruth was pardonable it was furely fo in this case, for heaven knows what might-nay, what certainly would---have followed, had I told him it was his friend the Colonel that had proved himself so base and unworthy that distinction. With some difficulty I prevailed on her to keep the fecret, though not till I had, in the most lively colours, painted to her the iminent danger Harry would be involved in, if she did not oblige me. It was this, and only this confideration that had any weight, as she wished for nothing more than to have the vile, despicable Colonel punished as he justly deserves, but since she found that could not be done without the utmost danger to my friend and protector, she was

was induced to lay afide all thoughts of revenging the affront.

But how shall I describe to you Harry's rage and disappointment, on being told the could give no account of the person who had dared to offer it? Never in my life did I fee him in fo violent a passion. Yes, Charlotte, he even blamed me for having tempted him to fuffer any one to go but himself to discover the villain who had thus dared to intend him fo irreparable an injury. - But depend upon it, Clara, said he, I will never rest till I discover and punish him as he deserves. All my influence, all my fmiles were now fcarcely fufficient to calm his rage. By a thousand foft and gentle persuasions I at last, however subdued it, and endeavoured to perfuade him it was revenged in a more mortifying manner already, than by any other method it could possibly be.

Heavens! Charlotte, how I rejoice that I was inspired with so necessary a caution! I now find he only waited with patience

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till Sarah's return, having pleased himself with the hope that my scheme, with which I was fo diverted, would not only amuse me, but more certainly discover the truth and person, than if he had gone himself, as the appearance of a man, instead of the expected fair one, would undoubtedly have alarmed the hero, who would most certainly, have shunned so disagreeable a Neither, indeed, did he then meeting. know where the place of rendezvous was, nor durst ask any questions of the guide, left he should suspect his design and frustrate his purpose by informing his master. This was his scheme, Charlotte, while I, with great fimplicity, believed him quite charmed with mine. Have I not greatreason, I say, to rejoice that I have disap. pointed his rash, and perhaps fatal, purpose? He has but half forgiven me, notwithstanding all my eloquence and gentle condescension—but is not this very difpleasure the most tender and convincing proof of his constant, unabated affection? Moft

Most undoubtedly it is, though there wanted not this, Charlotte, to assure me of it, since every word, every look, declares this pleasing truth in the most agree able and engaging manner.

Adieu, my dear girl, be thankful with me that providence has preserved me from so fatal a snare, and pray that it may be the last attempt of the kind I may ever experience.—Farewell, believe me your's with great truth.

CLARISSA B-

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LETTER XX

To the SAME.

YES, my dear Charlotte, I am now convinced my misfortunes will never end but with my life; the infult offered me by that vile Jones is but the prelude to those other mortifications I am unavoidably doomed to suffer. Judge, my dear friend, what was my astonishment, the other day, when entering the parlour, I found

MISS CLARISSA B-. 121

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found Mr. Brown in deep consultation with Mr. and Mrs. Bellmour!—I guessed, but too easily, by his guilty looks, what had been the subject of their conversation. He soon after took his leave, without explaining himself in any more intelligible manner, nor indeed was there the least occasion for it, as they spoke but too plainly his ridiculous purpose; but lest I should not comprehend the amazing selicity of which they meant to inform me, Mrs. Bellmour desired me to follow her to her room.

It is impossible, Charlotte, to describe to you the tremour I was in, or the emotions her orders occasioned in my heart; it beat and fluttered as it would have left my breast, and slown to that of the amiable Harry for protection, against the pains it was going in a moment to receive.

When we were feated, Clara, faid she, I am forry I cannot keep the promise I made you never again to mention Mr. Brown to you as a lover; he has warmly Vol. I. G foli-

folicited our interest in his favour, and as fome circumstances are changed since he first made proposals, you must, my dear girl, excuse me if I acknowledge that your compliance in this affair would give me pleasure; he is a man of sense and worth much esteemed by the best people in the country, his fortune, tho' not very affluent, yet fuch as I am fure you would not object to. His age, I own, is not fo fuitable to yours, yet, furely, this is not an objection of any very great weight, nav many instances might be brought to prove the contrary; but I will leave all to your own natural good fense and obliging difposition, of which I have daily so many proofs.

Believe me, my dear Clara, it gives me the greatest pain that I am obliged to urge any thing that is in the least disagreeable to you, but I have reasons for my conduct. She paused, as for my answer, but I was dumb, so lost in thought on what she had already said, it was impossible to form

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MISS CLARISSA B- 123

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Shall I, my dear child, confess to you the motives that have induced me to yield my confent to Mr. Brown's propofals?-I know you generous, and that your gentle nature would not fuffer you to injure, even in thought, any one, much less those for whom I am fully convinced you have the utmost affection. Harry Bellmour (The mention of this dear name, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary, made me blush; my face began immediately to glow, confcious as I was what would follow fuch a beginning; however, she took no notice of this confusion, tho' I was sensible she observed it) Harry Bellmour, my dear Clara, has not been able to preferve his heart from the force of those amiable perfections and many engaging qualities of which you are possessed, nor do I blame him; he has by this, only proved the justness of his sentiments-but, my dear girl, there is a bat which I must, the' with regret, inform you

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is unfurmountable—but for this, with what joy would we confent to what I have long feen he fo ardently, fo fondly expects! Yes, I know the fecret of his heart, I know the hope he has cherished, nor am I furprised, but blame myself for so long exposing him to the power of charms like yours, sensible as I have ever been of the impossibility of fuch an union. Yet, how could I part with you? how give up the delight I have ever received from your engaging company? So dutiful, so endearing in every word and action, could I but feel for you the tenderness of the fondest mother? Yes, my dear child, fuch I ever must feel, and it is my joy that I do so; yet must I, for reasons which you, I am fure, would justify, were I at liberty to impart them, disapprove my son's design; and you, my dear Clara, must assist me in conquering his passion. This, and only this, is my motive for pressing you to liften to Mr. Brown's offer, which tho' in every respect such as might please us, yet would

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would I not urge you to comply did I not hope you might be extremely happy, and at the same time conquer in Harry an affection which can only serve to torment him, as it is impossible his desires can ever be complied with. I do not expect an immediate answer to my proposal—consider of it, my dear girl, and let me, by your determination, judge of your affection for those who love you with the utmost tenderness.—She left me in a situation it is impossible to describe.

What a proof is this she requires!—
Alas! I fear it is impossible.—What will become of my dear Harry? How will he bear to be thus cruelly convinced? How very just my fears have ever been!—What can those reasons be, those dreadful reasons, which she is not at liberty to reveal?—It cannot be my birth, she did not, even in the most distant manner, seem to hint at that mortifying circumstance. What then can it be? Think for me, my dear Charlotte, help me to unravel this perplexing mystery, G 3

the cause of so much woe--- Advise me, my dear friend --- tell me, must I, can I, make fo great a facrifice ?--- Will nothing less do? Write to me---yet, do not, oh do not, add your influence in favour of what my heart will die rather than endure. Sensible as I have ever been of the infinite obligations I am under to this generous family, yet tell me, Charlotte, must I, am I really obliged to give so dreadful a proof of my gratitude as this she demands? --- What will be come of me, my dear friend? who will advife me, who direct me, in so important an affair? Had I been inclined to confult Harry---which yet I think I should not, as I too well knew the pain this affair would have given him, and that all his influence on his father would have been too weak to make him change his cruel pur pose--had I been inclined, I say, to consult him, my defire could not have been indulged, as he is from home, nor will return, I much fear, in time to fave me from the misery I must, whatever I resolve on, Adieu, fuffer.

Miss CLARISSA B-. 127

Adieu, my dear friend, pity, for I am truly miserable, Your

CLARA B---

LETTER XXI.

To the SAME.

A LAS! my dear Charlotte, my fate is is at last determined. I am in a sew days to leave B—, and all those dear friends that have, till this cruel affair, been ever so sweetly kind and indulgent. Yes, Charlotte, I must leave this peaceful dwelling, must no longer enjoy the society of my generous benefactors—or their too amiable son.

Iwas fitting, with a heavy heart, revolving in my mind the conversation I had lately been engaged in, and endeavouring to prevail on that heart to obey the cruel commands it had received, convinced my duty and gratitude require that sacrifice, when Mrs. Bellmour, with looks more mild and gentle than I had reason to expect, entered my apartment, where

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fhe found me lost in thought, and by my looks too plainly discovered the agony and distress with which my mind was tortured.

I come, my dear Clara, faid she, to free you, if possible, from the pain I am sensible you at present feel. I have considered, my dear girl, what can be done to relieve you from the fears you entertain on Mr. Brown's account, and at the fame time be the most likely means to conquer in my fon that passion he must, on no consideration, encourage. After a thousand reflections on the subject, I have at last formed a resolution, which will, I hope, meet your approbation, as it will not only in some measure free us from our fears on Harry's account, but also be a means to procure you a great deal of pleasure. However defirous Mr. Bellmour and myfelf may be to fee you fettled in a manner agreeable to our wishes, and though in point of interest this offer is certainly such as we could not object to, yet as it is evi-

Miss CLARISSA B. 129

evidently from motives of duty and gratitude only that you would accept it, we are determined not to require fo mortifying a proof of that affection of which we are already perfectly fensible; but as there is an absolute necessity for putting a stop to that passion I seedaily encreasing in my son, and as your absence from B, for some time, is the most probable means to effect this defired end, will you, my dear Clara, consent with chearfulness to pay a visit to my sister in London? She has ever given evident proofs of her love and efteem for you, and will, I am certain, rejoice at this opportunity to convince you her professions were not more frequent than fincere. To fay how much pain this separation will cost me is impossible, your own heart can best inform you, as I am perfuaded you do me justice in believing I love you with a tenderness no words can express. But, my dear girl, let this prove to you the absolute necessity there is to break off all hopes of that union which I

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am, and have long been, fensible my for has with fuch pleasure projected. After the pains of parting with us-for I flatter myfelf my Clara will feel fome, at leaving those friends for whom she has ever shewn fo much affection and efteem - afrer those are over, I say, I hope you will, from Mrs. Rowe's family, meet with fo many civilities, and with her daughter partake of fo many amusements, that I am perfuaded you will have no cause to regret your having obliged us by giving her, for a few months, the favour of your com. pany; a favour, you, my dear, are fenfible the has fo very often earnestly requested. My neice is perfectly amiable, and will be charmed with a companion fo agreeable and engaging. Tell me, can you with pleasure accept her invitation?

Could I, Charlotte, feel that satisfaction she so kindly desired? Was it possible for me to rejoice in being thus banished from the presence of these dear friends, and the too lovely object of my first, my only

MISS CLARISSA B-: 131

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only affections?—Alas! I too well knew, however delicately this banishment was pronounced, it was yet to separate me forever from all I held dear on earth.—I endeavoured, however, with a tolerable grace to assure her I would, with the utmost readiness, accept the savour she intended me, but with greater truth assured her, she had made me infinitely happy by freeing me from Mr. Brown's addresses. Much more was said to testify my gratitude for that, as well as every other obligation I continually received from her and her family, for whom I should ever retain the most sincere respect and affection.

After a thousand kind and obliging promises ever to look upon me as her daughter, and assuring me I should hear from her every post, it was concluded that I should take the opportunity of Harry's absence—who is not yet returned —to leave B—; not that my visit is to be kept a secret from him, as that would be impossible, but it was judged

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most prudent to spare him the pains of parting.—Oh! Charlotte, was it not rather that they feared the weakness of your friend, though she had too much delicacy to express her sentiments more plainly?

Yes, my dear friend, I am born to be wretched.-Was not the fatal doom pronounced at my unhappy birth? - What hope then have I left?—not one kind ray to chear the gloomy prospect. all those gaieties, those amusements to me, whose heart is diffressed and torn with a thousand cares and fruitless anxieties? Is it possible I should with joy partake in the diversions with which that gay and much admired place so much abounds? - O, nothey do not, even in idea, yield me the fmallest consolation, nor will they, with all their boafted perfections, I greatly fear, ever for a moment, make me forget my misfor-No, Charlotte, they have not any charms for me, however coveted and enjoyed by others. - But adieu. - I must now begin my melancholy task, I must prepare for

Miss CLARISSA B-. 133

for that journey which is going to make me the most wretched creature alive.

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CLARISSA B-

LETTER XXII.

To the SAME.

T Blush to acknowledge that I have now been in town above three weeks, and have not, till this day, found an opportunity to inform my dear Charlotte of my arrival; my mind was so distressed and miserable for the first week, that I found it impossible, and it was not without the utmost pain I could prevail on myself to write a few lines to my dear Mrs. Bellmour, which was yet absolutely my duty, and what even civility required. I have heardfrom her twice, in the most obliging manner.-O, Charlotte, Harry was not then returned, nor yet knows the amazing change in my affairs!-But let me not indulge my pen on that too pleasing, painful subject; it must, my dear friend, indeed

deed it must, be for ever banished from my memory.

As you are no stranger to this gay place, there is no necessity for my attempting a description of it, neither would you, from that I should be able to give you, form any very just idea, had I the vanity to try the extent of my genius on a fubject fo copious; but, believe me, I find not the smallest inclination to expose my want of capacity on the occasion, nor am I much more inclined to describe to you my furprise at all the wonderful things I have feen, but rather intreat you to recollect what you experienced yourfelf on your first visit, which I am certain will furnish you with many more agreeable, as well as just remarks, than any I can possibly make. - This pretty turned compliment will, I hope, induce you to pardon me, if you had promifed yourself any amusement from knowing my thoughts on the beauties of your admired town.

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Thus far by way of apology, or preface; let me now tell you, that I was received by Mrs. Rowe and her amiable daughter in the most friendly and agreeable manner. I never faw Miss Rowe before, though her mother has feveral times been to visit Mrs. Bellmour, and ever expressed great esteem and friendship for me. I have reason to believe her daughter will indeed merit all those praises I have so often heard bestowed upon her. Her brother too, Charlotte-I fear you'll not forgive me for leaving him the last, when I tell you he wears a cockade, and is, to fay truth, no very despicable figure; but I have already had fo frightful an adventure with one red coat, that you may believe I am not greatly prejudiced in favour of the rest, though I have certainly no right to expect fuch gallantry from the whole race. The case was different then; my fwain wanted a little innocent amusement to divert the tedious hours, while banished from the charming town, and very judiciously chose that most fuited to the the country. Rural scenes, you know, naturally inspire romantic ideas. An intrigue, in the common stile, would have been nothing new, and consequently not worth his trouble; but to get his mistress into his power by a scheme so very clever and ingenious, must no doubt have been perfectly delightful, and could not fail to afford him many agreeable and pleasing restections ever after.

I fear, Charlotte, I shall not be able to continue fo punctual a correspondent as I have hitherto been, for if I may judge by what little I have feen of a town life, I think I may, with justice, conclude there is but a finall portion of time allowed for writing. I have not feen a pen employed on any more important occasion than to fettle the time and place of a quadrille party, or fome other of equal confequence, fince I have been in this hurrying place; nor indeed do I see a possibility of sparing time for any other. To be able to write a card, in the proper form and stile, is all that is required of the ladies here, and that

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that is fo generally the same that it needs no very bright genius to excel in that art. How much true pleafure do they lofe by thus neglecting to converse with their abfent friends! For my part, I would not give up the pleafing fatisfaction I receive from it, for all that imaginary happiness they are for ever fo eagerly purfuingfor that it is imaginary, Charlotte, is to me clear, beyond dispute. I protest I am every day more fatigued with doing-in fact nothing-than ever I was in the country with walking a mile or two to fee an agreeable friend, or to enjoy the beauties of some delightful prospect.-O, Charlotte, when shall I again be permitted to revisit its peaceful shades! - But I am already returning, in spite of my very weak resolution, to that subject on which alone my pen obeys without reluctance. -Yet can I fo foon forget the many delightful hours I have passed there? Must I no more reflect, with pleafing rapture, on the continual engaging proofs I every hour

hour received of the most tender affection and esteem?—O, my dear friend, use all your eloquence, shew me, in your persuasive language, the ingratitude I should be guilty of not to tear from my breast a passion so ill placed. I will endeavour to obey the cruel command, though heaven knows what that effort will cost me.

I am fent for, Charlotte, the dinner waits. I will not finish this till some other opportunity, as I intended, when I begun, to have been much more particular in the account of my new situation. To-morrow I may, perhaps, be in a disposition to conclude it more agreeably than I should were I to end it now; till then adieu.

I again refume my pen, my dear Charlotte, and will endeavour to fulfil the promise I made of being a little more lively than when I laid it down; though, unless you will be content with meer trisles, I shall find it a matter of no small difficulty; but even those when relating to

Miss CLARISSA B-. 139

your friend, will, I am fenfible, to you appear of consequence.

Mrs. Rowe is a most agreeable woman, and her daughter perfectly amiable. The latter obligingly affured me the pleafure of my company was a favour she had very long fincerely wished for, and had often entreated her mother to intercede with Mrs. Bellmour for that happiness. As she never was blessed with a sister, she with great fweetness tells me, I shall supply to her that loss, and hopes I will not refuse her my friendship, if I find her worthy that distinction. After tea, and the first formalities were over, Mrs. Rowe defired her to shew me my apartment, which she kindly told me she had ordered near that of her daughter, as she imagined we should chuse to be often together, and hoped, from the refemblance she knew there was in our tempers and inclinations, she was not deceived. I expressed my thanks for the obliging compliment, and with pleasure followed my fair guide-She

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She tells me this is not the house they lived in when you was in town. It is fituated in Pall-mall, which I am told is one of the best streets in town. I found a perfectly neat bed-chamber, and fmall, though elegant, dreffing-room; but what pleased me particularly was, the view I have from my window of that noble and spacious opening, St. James's park. This unhoped for prospect in a town, you may believe, gave me infinite pleafure. She begged I would imagine myfelf at home, and use every thing in their house with the fame freedom. Her maid is now to divide her labours between us, and is, Miss Rowe affures me, an Abigail perfectly versed in the mysteries of the toilet, and all the modern fashions us to red to sad assa

Were it possible for me to taste any selicity, removed as I am from B— and all its dear inhabitants, my present situation would certainly afford me a great deal; but it is in vain to hope or expect it. Yet I will endeavour to appear so, lest I should seem

Miss CLARISSA B- 141

feem ungrateful for the continual favours
I every day receive from my new friends.

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I had yesterday a letter from my dear Mrs. Bellmour, full of the most flattering promises never to forget nor cease to love me. Harry is returned, and, she confesses, was in the utmost astonishment, on being told I was gone, but as he faid nothing particular, they did not chuse to come to any explanation with him concerning the reason of my journey, but told him it was in consequence of a presfing invitation from Mrs. Rowe, who had so frequently solicited that favour, and my having just then so favourable an opportunity of going with Mrs. Biddulph, which you know I did. Probable as all this appeared, she easily saw he gave but little credit to it, but faid nothing. He has ever fince been so melancholy and dejected, that they are miserable, nor know in what manner to proceed.) Mr. Bellmouris fometimes of opinion, that to make him certain of his fate, cruel as it is, will

be

be the most effectual way to conquer his hopeless passion.

Think, my dear Charlotte, what I fuffered while I read this afflicting letter. She tells me all these things as to one quite unconcerned. Is it possible, Charlotte, the should really believe me so? - Does she not rather affect to believe it, left a contrary behaviour should encourage me to disclose to her the troubles of my heart, and induce me to beg her influence with Mr. Bellmour in my favour?—Heavens! how very mortifying is the thought! And yet, this behaviour is strange. - Can she, acquainted as fhe is with his ten thousand amiable perfections, can she, I say, think it possible I should be insensible to them all? - O, no, too fure she knows my weakness, and fears to encrease it, by giving me an opportunity to write my fentiments on the cruel subject.

Adieu, Charlotte, Miss Rowe has sent to know if a walk in the park will be agreeable to me, as two young ladies have just called to desire the favour of her company and mine.—You see, my dear girl, it is not now, as in the dear peaceful country, in my power to indulge so fully my scribbling humour. Farewell.

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CLARISSA B-.

LETTER XXIII.

To the SAME.

WHAT a talk have you enjoined me, my dear Charlotte! Easy as it may appear to you, I protest it would puzzle me not a little to comply with your request, however reasonable; and I sear were I to take a retrospect view of that time I have passed since my arrival in London, I should have but very small reason to congratulate myself on the use I had made of it. Three months are now gone, and shall I confess, that I think the only moments of which I can give you any tolerable account, are those I employ in writing to my dear Mrs. Bellmour and yourself?

In-

Infipid vifits, where cards fupply the place of conversation, steal from me those hours which were certainly given us for a very different purpose. This amusement is now fo general, that agreeable fociety is utterly banished from the fashionable world. Instead of that agreeable, lively wit one would naturally expect to be entertained with when a dozen fmart belles and beaux are affembled, you are no fooner entered the room, than feated at a card table, where, in spite of the many politely rude things you are frequently obliged to bear with, you must sit till the hour of taking leave, and even appear to be charmed with the delightful The crowds of company people party. are obliged to keep, is the excuse pleaded for encouraging this stupid amusement; as they very justly observe, it is not pol. fible to have an agreeable intimacy with fo many, and confequently were they to banish cards, it would be a task too difficult to supply their place, by agreeable

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MISS CLARISSA B-: 145

conversation with people who are many of them almost strangers to those they vist. But, furely, this terrible objection might be removed, if, instead of that croud of company they talk of, they would content themselves with a well chosen few, whose pleafing fociety would certainly make ample amends for the want of that fo much admired buftle and confusion. But then the vanity of having your door crowded by coaches and chairs, and having it allowed in all companies that no one has a more numerous acquaintance; this is the charm, Charlotte. Who would give up that envied distinction for the infipid joys of friendship? From the playhouse, indeed, I have received great pleafure; that is the only diversion that has answered my expectations. We went the other night to fee your justly admired Garrick perform, who charmed me beyond expression. As a new face, I was honoured with many foft glances from the fmarts that furrounded us, particularly a VOL. I. cluster H

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Rowe, who was of our party, the fight of them gave my heart a flutter, it did not foon recover, left I should discover my knight errant to be one of the number; I was, however, happily deceived, but as he is in town, it will be almost impossible not to meet him in some of these places, and should it be in this public manner! shall certainly die.

There has been so much said both for and against this diversion, that it would be presumption in me to give my sentiments on so important a subject; but I will just observe, that I think very little good instruction is likely to be received (supposing the performance calculated for that purpose, which, however, is not always the case) while so very little attention is paid to the offered lesson. The evident design of all the company within my view, was to see, and to be seen; this seemed to me their principal motive for their meeting.

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I was led to my chair by one of the beaus I mentioned, who, during the play, had been faying a number of foft things to me--foft enough, Charlotte, in all reason -- and, with great gallantry, pointed out every thing he thought worthy my observation in the place. He told me the names of all the beauties who that night graced the boxes, seemed to have a general acquaintance amongst the belles, and received many gracious smiles, in return for the elegant bows he honoured them with. He is intimate with young Rowe, and on that account, I suppose, conferred on meall that profusion of politeness.

What shall I add more?—Surely, my time has not been intirely divided between cards and the play-house!—and yet, I protest, I can give you no account of any other than that I have bestowed on them—I blush to acknowledge it, Charlotte, and with a sigh look back to those days of happiness and tranquility I shall never again enjoy. But I am determined, if I H 2 must

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must continue in this gay town, to make some alteration in my way of life, and not lose my time in these trisling dissipations, as I find, when called to account for it, I make but an insignificant sigure.——You see your letter has had a better effect than you perhaps intended by your question.

Miss Rowe plays agreeably on the harpsichord, and draws prettily. With these accomplishments, and the sew I am mistress of, I think we may make some considerable improvements in our plan. Let what is past be attributed to the curiosity natural to a stranger, and on that account, in some measure, excusable.—A letter is just brought me from Mrs. Bell-mour.—Adieu, Charlotte,

Believe me ever yours.

CLARA B-

LETTER XXIV.

To the SAME.

HEAVENS! Charlotte! what a letter!—How shall I give you any idea of its charming contents? how do Justice to the tender, delicate sentiments with which it is filled ?-- Need I tell you it is from the lovely Harry ?----He vows nothing shall prevent his following me to London, if he cannot prevail on his father to alter his cruel resolution. He tells me he has, in the most submissive and respectful manner, declared to him his sentiments in my favour, and implored his consent to what alone can make him happy--but in vain--the answer he received has made him miserable beyond expresfion. They faid a thousand flattering things in my praise, but still declared he must endeavour to conquer a passion that, if encouraged, could only ferve to torment him.

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Can I indulge his earnest request, and not act contrary to my duty ?---may I, Charlotte, answer his obliging letter, without incurring Mrs. Belmour's displeafure? I would do nothing that might justly disoblige her, but, furely, that I will fend shall give no just cause, for you may depend upon it, I will, with every perfualive argument, entreat him not to think of fuch a journey, and to yield perfect obedience to his father, who, I am convinced, must be extreamly unhappy, that he is thus obliged to refuse the request of a son he fo tenderly loves. Determined as I am to give him this advice, I think I may write to him, Charlotte--I have never yet answered one of the many letters I have received, but I am now in terrors, left he should, by keeping his word, so greatly displease his family, as l am certain that could not fail to do.

Heavens! Charlotte, should he really follow me, who will convince them I have given him no encouragement?---Yet they cannot

cannot--it is impossible they should believe me capable of such ingratitude.

While I read his letter, I forgot I had ever been a moment unhappy. No care, no forrow, had then a place in my breaft; I believed myself mistress of all the felicity this world could give; and now, when I cooly reflect on its contents, think I have too much reason to make a very different conclusion - so fleeting, Charlotte, and uncertain, are all the pleasures we enjoy. After all these infurmountable obstacles, it can be no other than my unfortunate birth and want of fortune, for I am perfuaded, I have their fincere esteem and friendship—this they have a thousand times declared—But it is in vain to fearch for those reasons which they only are acquainted with.

I am going to answer Mrs. Bellmour's letter and perhaps her son's.—adieu.

Yours.

CLARA B-

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LETTER XXV.

To the SAME.

H! my dear creature, what a furprife !- I hav fcarce breath to tell you the flutter I am in .--- Guess, my dear girl, who has been here to tea. Miss Rowe came up to my room, with more than ufual vivacity in her looks, and with great gaiety beg'd me to put on all my airs and graces, for there was fuch a beau in the drawing-room!---Come and fee, added she, tho' I am half afraid to trust him with a fight of you, as I have determined to make a conquest of him myself, and fear my defign will not be quite fo eafy when he has once feen your Ladyship---and I protest, cried she, you look intolerably handsome to day---what, in the name of envy, have you been doing to yourfelf? My brother has furely given you a hint that his friend was to be here. But come down, fince

MISS CLARISSA B-. 153

fince it must be so; however, I insist upon it you do not treat him even with one smile. Thus she ran on, and would have continued to run on, had not a servant come to inform us tea waited.

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Downwewent, with hearts all in a flutter; but judge, my dear girl, what mine felt on finding, in this formidable beau, my noble and adventurous knight, Colonel Jones !--- Heaven knows how I looked but never man made a more aftonishing and ridiculous figure than he did; but flattering himself [though more than half convinced he was mistaken I was ignorant that he was the hero of that gallant atchievement, he endeavoured to pay his respects to me with his usual freedom and politeness; rejoiced much to see me in London, hoped I left Mr. Bellmour's family well, and that I intended to stay at least the winter in town .-- I too, you may believe, tried like him to appear quite easy and unconcerned, but fancy we neitherfucccededverywellin ourdefign. Whether he by

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that was perfuaded I really was ignorant of his base intention, I know not, but he found courage, before he left us, to make me, as usual, a thousand fine speeches; declared this unexpected meeting had given him more joy than he could express, and hoped I would permit him, by a constant attendance upon me, whilst in town, to convince me of his sincerity, and begged the honour to be one of our party on every occasion.

Miss Rowe, I believe, did not altogether enjoy the violent pleasure he seemed to express. But I fancy wished it had slowed from any other cause.—She appeared more displeased than I expected, notwithstanding her declarations in my room, as I then imagined she meant nothing more than to raise my curiosity; but I now plainly saw she was more in earnest than I had believed.

As I had never mentioned his being of our acquaintance in the country, she was not a little surprised to find me so intimate with with a town beau.—I gave her, however, no cause of uncasiness on my part, as I received all his civilities with the utmost indifference.

Miss Rowe, when we were alone, asked me how long I had known the Colonel, and when his passion commenced, which she greatly seared would save her the trouble of attempting the conquest she intended, as it was very evident the heart she meant to captivate, was already in chains.

I affured her it was a prisoner I had not the smallest inclination to retain, nor had ever used any arts to subdue; and that I, with great pleasure, from that moment, gave up all the right and title she imagined I had over it. I then assured her, his politeness was meerly owing to the intimacy that had long subsisted between his family and that of Mr. Bellmour.

Pardon me, my dear, cried she, if I doubt that being the only cause. People are not so over civil from such very sober reasons as those you mention: However

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intimate he may be with my aunt's family, I am much deceived if that alone would induce him to shew you such violent respect and affiduity. No, no, my dear, men are not fo over well bred, where they have no views, no felf-love to gratify. That fair one has but small chance of gaining those distinctions, those tender glances he fo frequently honoured you with, unless the heart is really touched. Point them out a large fortune, indeed, and let the owner be either old or uglynay both-fhe may command any degree of respect she will deign to accept. Is it not fo, Clara, with you people in the country? It is, I affure you, entirely the case here. I thank my stars I have enough to claim some share of attention, but you have engaged that of the only person from whom it would at this time have been acceptable.—But take him, Clara,—it would be in vain ever to expect that heart should return whole that has once been fo entirely your's. I must endeavour to make

Miss CLARISSA B-. 157

a more fortunate choice, next time I am inclined to part with mine.

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Whatever Miss Rowe might feel, she is too amiable to appear displeased; though I could not but see, in spite of her smiles, she wished we had not been such very near neighbours. She is a most agreeable girl, and I very sincerely wish I had power enough over her favourite's heart to make it her's for ever, on condition it was a little refined and purished from its too gross sentiments, for in its present state it is not worthy that felicity.

What say you, Charlotte, to this unlucky meeting?—I always feared it would be so, as young Rowe has so general an acquaintance amongst his brethren of the sword. I protest, I tremble to think what might have been my fate.—But, surely, he will not dare to attempt any other such enterprise, after making so poor a figure in the last!—Indeed, I believe your military men look upon those affairs as agreeable trisses, which serve to fill up the many

many hours that, without fuch innocent amusements, would hang wondrous heavy on their hands. It is a thousand pities some useful employment could not be found to prevent their doing mischief, since they will not enjoy with gratitude the privilege they have of being idle. I beg their pardon for the liberty I take with them, but let them thank their friend the Colonel for giving me this opinion of their morals; I will with pleasure retract it, when I fee a reformation begun. You, Charlotte, cannot condemn my fentiments, after the pretty history you gave me in your last, as it ferved to prove the mighty power founiverfally ascribed to a red coat and cockade. Be careful I do not hear of your taking a trip to Scotland with one of them.-Example is, you know, more prevalent than precept.-After all, I ought not to cenfure the whole for the faults of one.-1 therefore, once more, beg their pardon, and, on condition they will fuffer me to pass quietly through life, without insistt

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I will own, they are a smart set of beings, and no small ornament to any place that is honoured with their company. I am also convinced, from what I have seen since I came here, that they are, in general, agreeable, well-bred men, and mostly handsome. I fancy those who happen not to be so do not chuse to make their defects more conspicuous, by going into the army, as a cockade immediately attracts the notice of us females, whom alone they can wish to please. This, Charlotte, must be the reason why the men of that profession are so generally handsome.

What a differtation is here!—But the subject is too agreeable to need an apology.—So, my dear girl, adieu.

CLARISSA B-

LETTER XXVI.

To the SAME.

TELL, Charlotte, my swain, the Colonel, has been here almost every day, fince I informed you of our unexpected interview—how long that is I blush to recollect. - A plain proof, however, that my intended improvement is not very far advanced, notwithstanding my specious pomises; it is, nevertheless, what I fully intend, as foon as I have been at this one opera. He came yesterday, to beg Mrs. Rowe would allow him the honour of attending us to fee a new one that is to be performed tomorrow. It is, he affured her, to be most amazingly fine, the music and decorations perfectly enchanting. He prevailed, and nothing now remains but to prepare for making a figure on the occasion. The whole world, he fays, is to be there.-No wonder he fears there will be a crowd.

Miss Rowe has just been with me to consult what colour will best suit her fair complexion, and to settle some other points equally interesting and important. She insisted on my using no extraordinary ornaments on the occasion, but be satisfied with the conquest I had already made, and not again disappoint her hopes, as she was going with full purpose to be the death of some one, at least, of the thousand beaus we should, no doubt, see—indeed she threatened to lock up those I already had, and was, with no small care, adjusting.

I am now convinced, Charlotte, the Colonel believes me ignorant of his having made that vile attempt, and, if I may judge from appearances, which indeed are but too often deceitful, he is too well pleafed that it ended so peaceably ever to think of making a second. He is still perfectly polite, but not quite so passionate. You may believe this change gives me no great mortification.

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Adieu—you shall have a particular account of every thing when I return.—I then, without fail, begin my reformation.

Your's,

CLARISSA B-

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LETTER XXVII.

Mrs. Rowe, to Mrs. Bellmour.

OH! Heavens! my dear sister, what is become of our amiable Clarissa!—I am half distracted while I write, nor know in what manner to soften to you the missortune which yet I must not—cannot hide.—In what language shall I tell you the dreadful cause of my affliction? How make you sensible of the grief I suffer on the dear creature's account?—But while I endeavour to prepare you for this miserable accident, I forget you are racked with suspence.

Can I, must I tell you your Clarissa is lost?—Gone! my dear lister, nor can I, with

with any degree of certainty, guess where, or by what means, but am persuaded some base design has but too well succeeded in thus cruelly robbing us of her. You cannot doubt my care of, nor affection for, the amiable creature; judge then, by the pains I know Mr. Bellmour and you must suffer, of those I feel.

But why do I lofe time by these fruitless reslections? Rather let me entreat you to use every method in your power, as you may depend upon it I will, to regain her. Who the wretch can be, heaven only knows, and will, I hope, preserve her innocence and restore her to the friends, who, with unseigned sorrow, lament her shocking situation.

Let me endeavour to give you some account of this distracting affair. We went last Saturday, with a party of intimate friends, to the Opera. Some of them you are particularly acquainted with: Mrs. Bellamy, her daughters, and Colonel Jones, whose family I find live in your neighbourhood.

bourhood, with some others. When the Opera was over, the gentlemen led us to our chairs, though not without much difficulty, as there was a prodigious crowd. Whether the dear girl was put into a wrong one, or whether that too favourable opportunity was taken to execute any before concerted scheme, heaven knows; but who can describe my amazement and furprize, on not finding her with us when we were fet down? I observed no one in the least particular to her, during the performance, no circumstance that can give me the smallest glimpse of certainty, on whom to fix my fuspicions. - Colonel Jones, I am possitively convinced, led her to her chair.—What can I say more?—she is gone—and I am more miserable than it is in the reach of words to express! Depend upon it, nothing in my power, or that of my friends, shall be wanting to discover, if possible, the place of her concealment.—Heaven grant I may foon be able to fend you accounts that will relieve

you from the distress I am obliged to give you, by this cruel, yet necessary letter! Do me the justice to believe you cannot feel more on the dear sufferer's account than does, my dear sister, your affectionate,

ELIZABETH ROWE.

LETTER XXVIII.

Mrs. Bellmour, to Mrs. Rowe.

ALAS! my dear fifter, what a scene of villainy has your dreadful letter brought to light!—I have no time—nor, indeed, am I able, to describe to you the situation we are in,—but you may, perhaps, be able to judge of it in some measure when I tell you, Harry is set out for London half distracted. You know the passion he entertained for the dear girl was the reason of her being sent to you. Her absence has given him continual pain—but what could we do?—You know

the necessity there was to break off all thoughts of such an engagement. - What will be the consequence, should he find out the man who has thus cruelly injured us, I dare not resect upon. -- It was in vain, and indeed impossible, to conceal this affair from his knowledge; but I was amazed to see him so little astonished.

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What could we expect, he faid, after fending her from the protection of those friends that ought to have preserved her from that or any other insult?—For his part, he was not in the least surprised.—This was all he said.

He inftantly left us, and went, we were told, to her nurse Sarah. This, you may believe, appeared very extraordinary, as we could not imagine her the most likely person to give us that information we so ardently wished for—yet it was there he really found it.

Would you believe, the very Colonel Jones you mention, is undoubtedly the wretch who has basely betrayed her—it is indeed,

indeed, no other-and he that night, as you guess, only compleated the purpose he had it feems long premeditated. We have possitive evidence that our suspicions are well founded. Try then, my dear fifter, endeavour then, I beseech you, to find out the vile feducer. Should Harry and he meet, heaven knows what would be the event; but if any fatal effects should follow, our future days must, indeed, be unspeakably wretched. Oh, what infinite forrow do I feel for my poor Clara! How little did I-imagine her visit to you would have been attended with fuch unhappy consequences! I do not, believe me, say this as any reflection on you, nor in the least doubt your care of, and affection for, her—I am perfectly convinced of both.

Mr. Belmour, you may imagine, is miserable on Harry's account, and not less so on my amiable Clarissa's, as he has ever loved her with the tenderness of a father.

Farewel,

Farewel, my dear fifter, that providence may direct you how to recover the dear creature, and by that means restore us to that peace we so much stand in need of, is the prayer of your,

CAROLINE BELLMOUR,

LETTER XXIX.

Miss Clara B-, to Miss Charlotte Brudnell.

Oh! my dear Charlotte! to what a miferable fituation am I reduced!—How shall I ever make you comprehend the terrors I endure?—I write, though heaven knows whether you will ever receive the melancholy epistle.—Oh! my friend what will become of me?—What misery do my dear friends at this moment suffer on my account!—The amiable, the generous Harry too—but let me not think of that, or I shall lose the power to give you the dreadful particulars.—Oh! Charlotte! what are my crimes, that I am thus

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MISS CLARISSA B-. 169

thus cruelly doomed to mifery and defpair! That unfortunate opera, that
dreadful night—what shall I say?—the
wretch, the vile detested Jones, that fatal
night, by an artifice but too successful, led
me through the crowd, and instead of my
own chair, hurried me into one he had no
doubt prepared for the abominable purpose, and in another followed me to this
hated place.

Who can describe my terror and dreadful amazement, when I was set down at a house I was a stranger to, nor could possibly guess in what part of this vile town it was?—Think, my dear friend, imagine what I suffered. I was carried in more dead than alive, and instantly fainted in the arms of the wretch who had thus cruelly betrayed me.

When I recovered, I found myself on a bed, surrounded by several women—one of them appeared to be the Mistress.—She imediately ordered the others to withdraw, and with great civility endea-Vol. I. I voured

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youred to convince me how rejoyced the was to see me recovered: begged I would allow her to get me a few drops to prevent a relapse, and affured me the gentleman was inconfolable for the terrors I had fuffered, and was gone to assift my friends, who he hoped would fuffer no other injury than I had done from fo dreadful an accident. Words so foreign to my unhappy misfortune drew my attention, as it appeared to me the woman was really deceived, nor possibly knew the villany that was intended me. When I was able to fpeak, I begged she would tell me what she meant by the dreadful accident she mentioned, and affured her those words were a perfect mystery to me, who knew of nothing but of being artfully conveyed from my company that fatal night in coming from the opera. She appeared in utter aftonishment, and seemed to believe my fright had really difordered my fenses. I convinced her, however, though not without

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MISS CLARISSA B ... 171

without some difficulty, that what I told her was really the case.

Is it possible, said she, that any gentleman should be so very base? He assured me, when he brought you here, that he had just been so fortunate as to preserve you from a fire, that had been discovered in your house, where he was visiting, with a great deal of other company; beged I would take all imaginable care of you till his return, as he was going to assist your samily, and to relieve them from pain on your account, by informing them of your safety.

What was my amazement at this abominable story!—No words can give you any idea of my fright. She either was, or pretended to be, innocent, and had no part in this vile scheme, and assured me she believed what he told her, as accidents of that sort, were but too frequent in London, to raise any doubts of its truth; and as she always let lodgings, and had then a bill up for that purpose, was not in the

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least surprised at his bringing me there, nor indeed had that not been the case, would her house have been refused to any one in such a situation.

Rejoiced, at least to find myself with an honest person, for so I was persuaded she was, from what she had told me, I was just going to entreat her to get me a chair, that I might, before the villain's return, be cartied home, when the found of his dreaded voice threw me again into terrors no language can express. I flew to the woman, implored her protection, begged she would not fuffer him to fee me, but fave me from his hated power.-You believe him guilty-you are convinced of his vile purpose -Oh, fave me, I befeech you, from this horrid mifery, and thereby do an act of mercy, that shall be gratefully, generously rewarded.—She begged me to compose myself and promised she would. He instantly appeared and the fight of him, again threw me into a fwoon.

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What magick he used, during that time, to perfuade the woman I had been delirious and only raved, and that what he told her was really truth, heaven knows; but when I again opened my eyes, I found all hopes of deliverance intirely vanished, and myself treated as one out of my wits. I faw him no more that night. In vain I begged to be believed, in vain entreated, in the most moving terms, to be delivered from my cruel confinement, but all my supplications were of no signification; the only begged me to compose myself, as talking would only retard my recovery, and affured me a good night's rest, would quite restore me, and enable me to enjoy the pleasure of knowing my friends were well.

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Language like this, you may believe, had near reduced me in reality to that state, she endeavoured to persuade me I was already in. Tears came in vain to my relief, I fainted several times during that dreadful night, and before the mor-

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ning was in-a burning fever. The fourth day I began, in spite of the agony of mind I endured, to recover. My health insensibly returned, but oh! Charlotte! all my hopes of happiness in this life are gone for ever! The wretch, at last, sent to beg he might be permitted to wait upon me, that he might have the happiness to congratulate me on my recovery.

—You may believe my refusal would have been in vain, as it was not in my power to prevent this shocking visit.

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He came, and with ten thousand specious apologies, implored my forgiveness for the trouble he had occasioned me; swore, nothing but the most violent passion, the most fervent love, that ever possessed the heart of man, should have obliged him to act as he had done; declared, he could not live without me, and too well knew how impossible it would have been, by any other means, to have gained the blessing he now enjoyed. He too well knew the force of love not to be sensible

fible of Harry Bellmour's endeavours to prevent his happiness .- Yes, my angel, cried the bold, horrid creature, fnatching my hand, with a frightful eagerness that made me tremble; his passion could not escape a lover's eyes, and oh! that I durst flatter myself that passion had met with no return !- Say, my angelic, my amiable creature, can you forgive the man who adores you, who will make it the fludy of his future life to convince you of his love and gratitude?-Tell me, my adorable Clara, tell me you will pardon me, and by that fweet condescension make me at once the happiest man on earth.

Forgive you, Sir! - Gracious heaven! is it possible you should expect for giveness for injuries like those you have been guilty of, and that too without proposing the only condition that can ever entitle you to that favour you pretend so ardently to desire? -If my pardon is, indeed, so highly valued, restore me immediately to my dear, my unhappy friends; on this condition

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alone you can with any degree of reason expect it.-Let me go, Sir-and be fatiffied with that mifery you have already brought on an unhappy creature who never, even in thought, offended you.-Reflect but a moment on the diffress, the pain you have given a family from whom you have so often received a thousand civilities, and for whom you have long professed to have the greatest esteem and friendship.-Can you, Sir, think on these things and not fee, with confusion, the ungenerous, and very base action you have been guilty of, in thus cruelly robbing them of their peace?-Restore me, I befeech you, to their protection, and, by that one act of justice, experience a fatiffaction infinitely more pleafing, than any that can ever attend one fo unworthy and cruel as this you are engaged in. Oh, let my tears, my prayers prevail, let me again be bleffed with the presence of my unhappy friends, and I will endeavour to

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MISS CLARISSA B-. 177

forget the cruel—very cruel treatment I have received.

By heavens, it is impossible—utterly impossible—I cannot, my angel, obey your cruel command.—Can you believe it in nature to refign you, to give you, after all my care and trouble, into the arms of my hated rival? Shall the happy Bellmour enjoy those smiles I would purchase with my life? No, my adored, my lovely creature, ask me any proof but this, of my unalterable, fervent passion, and I will fly to obey you; -but bid me not refign youin every thing but this I am wholly yours. -O let me hope, that by the most constant, studied assiduity to please my angel, to prevent her every wish, I shall at length prevail on her gentle nature to pity the man, whose happiness or misery depends upon her smiles!

He again took my hand, and pressing it to his lips (before I could possibly prevent the impertinent freedom (entreated me to bless him with one smile, as an

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believe I was but ill disposed to oblige him. I again repeated my request, and assured him, with more courage than I before believed I was possessed of, that he deceived himself greatly, if he entertained any such hopes, for whatever might be the consequence, I had but one condition to offer, and that I had already mentioned—if he would indulge me in that, I once more promised to forget what was past.

He gave me no hopes of granting my request, but said, he would urge me no farther at that time, yet hoped, when I next gave him permission to wait upon me, he should find my heart more favourably disposed.—Again he snatched my hand, swearing, he would rather be allowed to call that his own, than be emperor of the universe. He, with seigned sighs, and pretended forrow, left me, with as little hopes of regaining my dear, lost liberty, as before his detested visit.

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What will become of me, heaven knows.—I dare not let my thoughts wander on the dreadful subject, lest I should lose that sense I have but too much need of, to save me from his base designs.

I will try all my influence again with the woman of the house, though I have but small hopes to make any impression on her heart, as it is evident he has satisfied any scruples she might have had, whether he has told her the truth or not. It is certain she can no longer believe the first story, what he has now invented I know not, but fancy his purse has been more prevailing, however plausible his tale may have been.

Oh! my dear creature, how I tremble to think what may be the consequence of this shocking affair, even supposing I should be delivered from his power, which I yet think nothing less than a miracle can effect!

With what cruel reflections will my dear Mrs. Rowe be tormented, that so

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unfortunate an affair should have happened while I was under her care!—Harry too—the amiable, faithful Harry!—Oh! my Charlotte, am I not a miserable creature, born only to give pain and trouble to all those friends, to please whom I would, with joy, dedicate every hour of my life?—Tears blind my eyes—let me a while indulge them and lay down my pen.

Another tedious day is past, and I have, in vain, attempted to seduce my watchful guardian from her sidelity to her vise master.—I have been obliged to bear the mortification of another visit from him—It is impossible to repeat the multitude of professions and vows he made of that violent love he pretends to feel—they would if repeated, I am persuaded, give you as little pleasure as they did me.—Oh, Charlotte! how dreadful are the proofs he gives of that passion! Can he indeed believe this is the most amiable way to convince me of his sincerity?

We parted as before; he, obstinate in his purpose of tiring me into a compliance, I, as much so, to persevere in my sirst resolution.

I have some hopes to get this letter conveyed to the post, by the girl who sometimes attends me when her mistress is obliged to leave me. I will, therefore, seal it, that it may be ready in case I am so fortunate as to prevail.

Adieu.—I am too sensible I need not bid you pity your greatly distressed and miserable.

CLARA B-

LETTER XXX.

Mrs. Rowe to Mrs. Bellmour.

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Y OUR fon, my dear fifter, has been with me: would to heaven I could, with the affurance of his health, give you any other confolation!—but as yet I cannot.—Our fearch has hitherto been unfuccessful,

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cessful, tho' no methods have been untried to discover the dear creature's retreat.

The grief and aftonishment I felt at the history Harry has given me is inexpressible. My son never leaves him a moment, as I, with you, dread the consequence of his meeting this vile man. They are out for ever, but have as yet been able to hear nothing of him. Frank tells me, he is by the regiment said to be gone into the country, and that the officers in general believe this to be truth; but whether it be so or not, I am in continual terror.

I have endeavoured to prevail on Harry to be patient, and not attempt to revenge the injury by means that may endanger himself, should he ever have an opportunity; telling him, a man so base as the Colonel is not worthy the honour of being chastized, by his hand, and beg he will leave to providence that punishment he so justly deserves. He scarce

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feems to hear or give the least attention to all I can fay on this, or indeed any other subject. His thoughts are in continual agitation, he takes not a moment's rest, and is out for ever. What would I not give that we could find any one able to give us the least information in this dreadful suspence! Depend upon it, I will use my utmost care to preserve your amiable Harry from any-misfortune, who gives me inconceivable diffress by the diftraction fo visible in his every word and look. He declares continually, if she is not restored to his ardent wishes, he will no longer drag on that hated life, which, without his lovely Clarissa, will be infinitely worse than the most cruel death. Never was passion so deeply rooted as that he feels for the dear girl.-Why does fortune thus cruelly forbid their union! Well may you adore him as you do. I declare I feel for him all the tenderness of a mother, judge then how his distress afflicts me! I will not end this till they

return.

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return, in hopes I may be able to end it more agreeably than I began.—I expect them every moment.

Rejoyce with me, my dear lister!—our prayers are heard!—We have at last got some information of what we so ardently desired.—We are told that the Colonel is seen to go every day to a house in Southampton-street; that he wears no regimentals, nor has been a day out of town since that fatal one I shall ever remember, with forrow. It is here, no doubt, the dear creature is concealed. Heaven grant we may be able to regain her without any of those dreadful consequences I so justly fear!

Harry is all rapture, all transport at the joyful discovery. In vain I gently hint my cautions—they are all lost, he talks of nothing but his Clara, and declares his life will be nobly lost to free her from a moment's pain. Tomorrow, my dear Mrs. Bellmour, will I hope determine, and I slatter myself agreeably, this affair.

Farewel.

Farewel, Endeavour to console yourself with this belief, and by no means suffer, if you can prevent it, Mr. Bellmour's coming to town, as his presence can now be of no service, and his absence at this time must be terrible to you. Tell him I beg he will patiently wait the event, and leave the care of it to me.—Atlieu.

ELIZABETH ROWE.

LETTER XXXI.

Mrs. Rowe to Mrs. Bellmour.

AY heaven, my dearest sister, grant you fortitude to bear the shock of what I am under the cruel necessity of telling you! How shall I, without too much alarming your fears, disclose to you the events of Thursday?

The dear, the ever amiable and virtuous Clarissa, is once more safe under my protection. But how shall I tell you what her deliverance has cost?—Harry, our lovely, generous

generous Harry, is wounded!—But do not, I beseech you, indulge your sears, the surgeon's assure me it is not in the least dangerous. I begged they would not flatter me, and they declare, upon their honour, they do not. Be calm then, I entreat you; assure Mr. Bellmour he is in my house, and shall, he may depend upon it, have the best advise in town—be satisfied then, I once more beseech you, and hear the particulars of this unhappy affair.

My fon and he, on the day after my last, were conducted with great secrecy by their informer, to a tavern facing the house where he told them the Colonel visited. This was all the person knew of the affair, but of this he was possitive, and that was all they wished. They dismissed him, and with the utmost impatience waited the moment that was to bring him to their view.—It came at last. He went in, and they, in a few moments, followed. In vain the woman of the house denied his being there; they, without

out much ceremony, flew up stairs, when the first object that struck your son's fight was, the wretch kneeling at the feet of the dear creature, who appeared lovely as ever, in spite of that paleness and langour that had overspread her once animated and blooming countenance. This change, added to the fight of his rival, and him too in fuch an attitude, fired your fon with a rage he could not command. He fprung forward, and in a moment clasped the amazed, delighted creature in his arms. The furprise was too violent for her weak spirits-she could just faintly exclaim, in a voice that yet plainly spoke her astonishment and joy; Heavens! is it possible? O, Harry Bellmour !- and instantly fell lifeless on his breast. The fight of her in this condition, rouzed him from the momentary transport he had enjoyed; he placed her on a chair, when, hastily turning to the bell to ring for affiftance, the Colonel, who appeared like one thunderstruck at the

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unexpected meeting, met his eyes—their fwords were both drawn in an instant, and, in spite of your son's efforts, and that of the family who were affembled on hearing the noise, Harry received the wound I mentioned. Too eager and unguarded, he lost every advantage, nor thought of any thing but how to revenge the injury done to his adored, his lifeless Clariffa.

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When the recovered from her fwoon, judge what was her grief and dreadful aftonishment, to see her dear deliverer reduced, on her account, to a condition worfe than that from which she was just reftored! The fight of his blood, and the wretch who had been the occasion of this tragedy, threw her again into a fwoon, the had not power to utter one word, but fell lifeless by his side. He, faint with loss of blood, was soon in the same condition. A furgeon was fent for, by whose assistance they were both brought The Colonel now appeared shocked with the mifery of which he had been

been the author, and, in the most earnest manner, begged him to neglect nothing in his power to preserve his friend from danger: confessed he only was to blame, nor would on any account leave him a moment. It was judged improper to re-

move either of them that night.

I was immediately fent for, and the shock I felt is more eafily imagined than defcribed. The poor terrified Clara scarce knew me; she breathed, and that was all. At length, however, by our endeavours she was tolerably recovered; but fo' great was her amazement, grief, and joy, that fhe could express neither diffinctly. All her care was for her friend, her generous deliverer. Not a moment would the rise from his bedside, but there, in broken accents, exclaimed against the author of that pain and mifery he endured; and when she found he was still in the room, we could but with difficulty prevent her from again fainting. He was prevailed on to leave the apartment, and on this

the grew more calm, and, with every foft endearing expression, that the tenderest affection could dictate, she implored her dear Harry to live, and not leave her to be again exposed to the cruel infults of a wicked world; called him her dear protector-her only friend. Her well known voice, and the amiable fears she expressed, the sweet anxiety that appeared in her lovely languid eyes, gave him a joy he had not power to describe. He could only, with a look of infinite tender. ness, press her hand, which he held in his, gently to his lips. When he was able to speak, he assured her the tenderness and care she so sweetly expressed, could not fail to restore him to her wishes. Yes, my lovely creature, I flatter myself I shall yet live to be your protector. Never again will I yield for a moment, that delightful privilege to any one on earth; never again will I be feparated from my long loved, my gentle Clarissa.

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His emotions were judged too violent for his weak condition. On being told he must be kept perfectly quiet for that night, she was instantly silent, nor would fuffer him to utter one word more, however great the pleasure she received from his tender engaging promises. Now her whole care was to prevent the least noise, the softest whisper gave her infinite pain. Never, my dear Mrs. Bellmour, shall I forget the affecting scene, nor am. in any measure, able to do justice to her amiable unremitted care and anxiety, nor that tender assiduity with which she continually attends him. Is it possible, she every moment cries, I can ever repay those amazing obligations he has conferred upon me?-O, no, my dear Madam, you know not half the favours, the infinite favours I have received, nor the reafon I have to declare, my whole life will be far too short to testify my gratitude, and the fense I have of his unequalled generofity.

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After a tolerable night's rest, the surgeon was of opinion he might, without danger, be removed to my house in a chair. This was done, and I have now the satisfaction to inform you that he is entirely out of danger, and will, I hope, in a sew days, be able to confirm this agreeable truth, by writing to you himself.

Clara's recovery depends entirely on his; as he gains strength her's follows of course, nor would she, I am convinced, on any consideration, be well till he is perfectly so.

The Colonel has sent every hour to enquire for him, and expresses the utmost sorrow for the misery he has occasioned. I hope, on his own account, his repentance is sincere. I once more entreat you to be easy, and depend on my care, and the best advice in London, for the recovery of your Harry, who, I give you my honour, is in no manner of danger. It is three days since this letter was begun, and I

now blame myself for having so much alarmed you in the first part of it; but could I write otherwise, at that time? The grief and affliction I then felt will, I hope, be my excuse.

Let me hear from you immediately, that I may judge by your letter how far you obey me, by bearing this affair with becoming fortitude. Let the restoration of our dear girl confole you for the accident that your amiable Harry has met with. They both intreat me to fay a thousand dutiful things to you from them till they enjoy that pleafure themselves.

Adieu, my dear fifter, believe me ever vours.

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ELIZABETH ROWE.

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LETTER XXXII.

Mrs. Bellmour to Mrs. Rowe.

H! my dear fifter! what a variety of emotions did your kind, yet cruel letter raise in my breast! What inexpressible grief and affliction has this unhappy af fair cost Mr. Bellmour! No words can describe the misery of our present distracted fituation! Alas! Can I believe the flattering hopes you give us of our dear Harry's recovery? Dare I believe your affurances are fincere, or that you are not yourself deceived?-O, heavens! my dear fifter, what will be the consequence, fhould my too reasonable fears prove just? My poor Clarissa too-I condemn my heart for not enough rejoicing in her providential deliverance. Affure that dear girl of my tenderest love; tell her how unable I am, at this afflicting time, to express, as I wish, my unalterable affect tion:

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tion: she will easily believe the suspence and agony I endure must render that impossible.

Mr. Bellmour will be with you in a day or two-his fears and impatience diffress me more than I can describe.—What will be the consequence of this ill-fated passion! -I tremble for the pains I am too sensible they must endure, for is there the least probability that this union can ever take place?—Impossible! but let me not, by this cruel reflection, add to that load of trouble, I already find more than my fpirits can well fustain; but rather let me believe the flattering hope you give us. that a short time will restore the amiable Harry to health, and leave to providence the rest. Assure them both of my prayers for his recovery, and every other felicity they can desire. Believe me your infinitely obliged

CAROLINE BELLMOUR

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LETTER XXXIII.

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Miss Clarissa B- to Mrs. Bellmour.

TOW shall I, after the misery and affliction I have occasioned my indulgent and ever honoured benefactors, prefume to write, or in what manner testify the anguish and inexpressible forrow I feel?-Will my ever kind and amiable Mrs. Bellmour deign to read the professions I now make, and believe them fincere?-O, my dear Madam, were it possible for you to examine my afflicted, tortured heart, you might then-and only thenbe able, in some measure, to form an idea of the mifery I have endured for the great, -very great trouble, of which I have been the unhappy—though, I hope, you will believe, innocent cause.—What a return for the infinite obligations I have received, and am still favoured with! Obligations'

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ligations that I never can repay; for alas! my dear madam, I am poor indeed in every thing but gratitude, and my whole life will be too fhort to express half what I feel for your unbounded generosity and kind indulgence. But why do I doubt your pardon?-Have I not feen your obliging. tender expressions in your letter to Mrs. Rowe? Did you not there mention me with your usual goodness, when to mention me at all, or but with coldness and indifference, was a favour I had no reason to expect? Is it possible you should indeed permit me to hope I shall again be admitted to your presence? Again be allowed to visit that friendly mansion, within whose peaceful walls I have paffed fo many happy days?—Oh, hasten, I beseech you, the wished-for time, and never let me again leave its kind protection! How, my dear Madam, shall I mention what yet my gratitude, my duty requires I should? -Dare I, after what is past, speak of your too amiable fon?—Yes, let me con-K 3 fefs.

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fess, I feel for him all those tender sentiments which merit, like his, can never fail to inspire.—But spare me, my dear madam, on this delicate subject, and only believe me, that however sensible I may be con his numberless perfections, however pleasing the amiable professions he honours me with, I am too sensible of my own unworthiness, ever to aspire to that felicity he so generously wishes me to enjoy.

I think it incumbent upon me, before I am again restored to your care and family, to assure you nothing on earth shall ever induce me to violate my duty and the respect I owe you, by such ingratitude. On the contrary, I here promise to discourage—as heaven is my witness I have ever done—any hope or desire he may retain of that nature.

I have the inexpressible satisfaction to assure you, he will, in a few days, be able to pay you those respects in person, which which he now begs I will send, with those of Mrs. Rowe and her very amiable daughter.—Dare I, after all that is past, venture to subscribe myself your affectionate daughter? Oh! forgive your

CLARISSA B-

LETTER XXXIV.

Miss Clarissa B— to Miss Charlotte Brudnell.

IKNOW my dear Charlotte will rejoice with me, that I once again am permitted to write to her with my usual freedom.

O, heavens! my dear friend, what a dreadful fituation was mine when I wrote you my last! How shall I ever, as I ought, testify my gratitude for my deliverance?—And yet, Charlotte, think what that deliverance cost! O think of the pains, the cruel agonies, my lovely friend, my generous Harry has suffered on my account!—And the only reward I am permitted to

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give him, for all this tenderness, for all the misery he has endured, and the infinite favours I have a thousand times received, is to assure him I must for the future do every thing in my power to disappoint that hope on which he declares his happiness alone depends—a cruel return this, for obligations, such as mine—but my unfortunate destiny forbids my making any other.

As you are informed of every particular of my unhappy affair, you will, I hope, fpare me the repetition of the shocking story, as the remembrance of it must ever give me infinite pain.

Mr. Bellmour left us yesterday, he stayed a week in town, and has left his son perfectly recovered, after being confined above a month to his apartment. It was in vain his father pressed him to accompany him to B—, he declares he never again will see that place, till I am permitted to return with him, and added some other conditions which, if insisted

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on, must forever, I fear, effectually prevent it. Nothing is yet determined, nor is there the smallest hopes; nay, is it not, after all the trouble I have, though innocently, given his family, now more unlikely than before? Yet will he not abandon the pleasing delusion, but still slatters himself that time and his unceasing prayers and eloquence, will at last prevail.

Colonel Jones has given so many proofs of his sincere repentance, and expressed such earnest desires for an interview with Harry, that, by the persuasions of Mrs. Rowe and her son, he was prevailed upon to admit his visit. You may easily believe I was not of the party, nor do I think it possible I shall ever be able to bear that mortification. He talks of going abroad, since all his hopes of happiness are blasted here, and has really made proposals for exchanging his commission with an officer whose regiment is at Gibraltar. I hope shame, for his vile ungenerous attempt, as much as the vio-

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lent love he pretends to be tormented with, is a real inducement for his leaving England; though I much doubt, in spite of his present resolution, whether he will find courage, on a nearer tryal, to leave this dear town, where he is so perfectly qualified to make a shining sigure. No, Charlotte, I cannot believe Gibraltar will ever be so honoured, let him say what he will.

He expressed so much forrow and regret for his past conduct, that Mrs. Rowe declares it was impossible to refuse him that pardon he so earnestly solicited; but, after all, he cannot, it seems, depart in peace, without my forgiveness, and that too delivered in person; but how to grant this disagreeable request I know not, for at present I tremble at his very name.

I have never been out, nor feen any company fince that fatal accident, nor do I think I ever shall, as I now dread the thoughts of doing either. Miss Rowe is my only companion, who declares she is

fo charmed with the ferenity and peace we have enjoyed together for fome weeks, that fhe shall never again be able, with any spirit, to partake in those trifling diffipations she used too much to be engaged in. I have quite spoiled her for a town life, by the tafte I have given her for that of the country, and she assures me, if I am not permitted to remain with her for the rest of the winter, she will intercede with her mother, for leave to accompany me to B-. You may believe this promife gives me no fmall pleafure, as an agreeable companion is all that is wanting to render that dear place perfectly enchanting.

Mrs. Rowe has, in the most obliging manner, endeavoured to perfuade me to partake again of some little amusement. The more perfualive Harry too, adds his entreaties, and, with inexpressible sweetness, tells me, he fears such confinement to me, who have not been accustomed to that still life, will hurt that health he values

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values infinitely more than his own. Can I, Charlotte, but be charmed with fentiments fo delicate, fo perfectly amiable? What amusements can fo effectually preserve me from those ills he fears?

How can I, after that frightful affair, bear again to appear in public? Will not every eye be inftantly fixed on the heroine of fuch an adventure? And can I hope entirely to escape censure, howeven innocent? Is not the world ever more ready to condemn, than acquit?—Yes, Charlotte, convinced of this shameful truth, I am determined not to give them that opportunity to display their eloquence on a subject but too well suited to their taste. I detest scandal too much ever to encourage it in others, by giving them so favourable an occasion to gratify their inclination in that vice.

Adieu, my dear Charlotte, I hope I shall soon be permitted to return to the dear peaceful country, where I need no longer confine myself, but enjoy with freedom

MISS CLARISSA B-. 205

freedom its serene pleasures, nor fear the censure of evil tongues. Believe me yours, sincerely.

CLARISA B-.

LETTER. XXXV.

Mr. Bellmour to Harry Bellmour.

My DEAR HARRY,

IT is with inexpressible pain that I am obliged to disapprove the proposal you so earnestly make. I have given you a thousand reasons that ought to suffice, I have others, that I am not at present at liberty to disclose, which will ever render that union you so ardently desire, impossible. I have views for you of a different nature. Endeavour, I beseech you, to conquer a fruitless passion, a passion I do not, nor ever shall approve. I am as sensible of our Clara's perfections as you would have me; I love her as she justly deserves; but, I repeat it, I have other views

views for you that are absolutely incompatible with the hopes you have indulged in her favour. You may depend upon it she shall ever find in me the tenderness of a father, but never must claim it from the cause you so fondly—and, let me say, imprudently desire. Believe me, my dear Harry, I have reasons for my conduct. Remember, I know the world, and have more experience than you to direct me to act with prudence and discretion, in an affair of this importance.

Mrs. Bellmour will, in a few days, set out for London: she will stay a while with her sister, and then conduct Clarissa to B—. You are at liberty either to escort them in their journey, or to stay the rest of the winter in town, which sever is most agreeable to yourself. It is only in one instance I have ever wished to controul you, and in this one I must be absolute. Try the amusements of London, they may perhaps assist to banish that passion you are obliged to forget.—Try the

the experiment—absence has seldom failed to have that effect; but however, you are at liberty, I only advise what I think may perhaps affist your cure.

I found, on my return to B—, letters from Sir William, who gives me hopes we shall see him in a few months at the castle. His presence will, I hope, afford you so many amusements that, I flatter myself, you will the more easily be prevailed on to give up that passion which at present engrosses too much of your thoughts. In the mean time, try the various pleasures that London affords, and let me have the satisfaction to find my prescription has been essications; as that is as present the most ardent wish of my dear Harry's affectionate father,

THOMAS BELLMOUR!

LETTER XXXVI.

Miss Clarissa B— to Miss Charlotte
Brudnell.

HE disagreeable visit is at last over —I have absolutely been prevailed upon to fee the man who has caused me fo much affliction. What could I do. Charlotte? He was importunate, and Mrs. Rowe begged me to indulge him, adding, that fincere repentance was all that could be expected, and all the atonement in his power to make. The tremour I felt, when fummoned to appear, is inexpressible. I entered the room more like the offender, then the offended perfon. The diffidence and confusion, however, that was fo visible in his looks, gave me some degree of courage, and enabled me to receive him with tolerable composure. He [not indeed with his ufual forward airs and fluency of language]

guage | made many apologies for his conduct: confessed his crime in terms as severe as I could have done myself; and affured me, the scene, of which he had been the fatal cause, had made so deep an impresfion on his imagination, that he was fully determined never to be the author of fuch another. The fight of his generous friend, from whom he had ever so much esteem. in the condition to which his rashness had reduced him, would, he hoped, be a lesson he should never forget, and swore, if Harry had not recovered he should never have enjoyed a moment's peace while he lived, had his life been spared, which he declares should never have been, with his confent, folicited.

The tenderness he expressed on this subject, had more weight with me than all the apoligies he could make. Whether he was sensible of this I do not know, but he spoke in such agreeable terms, and bestowed so many just encomiums on the generous Harry, as he every moment call-

ed him, that my wrath infenfibly gave way to pity, for the remorfe he so feelingly expressed, and my forgiveness followed of course. He received the boon on his knees, with great respect took my hand and pressed it to his lips. He seems quite another creature; and if his reformation is fincere, it will be fome confolation for the affliction we have endured; as one must feel a very fensible pleasure in hearing that any one, even fuch as we never had the least connection with, was convinced that a life fo contrary to every principle of honour and religion, is base and unworthy the pursuit of a gentleman; how much more then, for one whose family is fo intimately connected with ours by the ties of friendship and esteem? They, I am certain, must have severely felt for his irregularities and misconduct, and will, consequently, rejoice with me that this enhappy affair has produced effects fo defirous. I could now almost wish him the good fortune to gain Miss Rowe's hand,

hand, as her heart I believe would eafily be prevailed on to follow the example.

I am in daily expectation of feeing my dear Mrs. Bellmour, who, I find, by a letter Harry received the other day, is foon to be in London. What inexpressible pleasure will her presence give me! I am, he tells me, to return with her to B-. Judge, my dear Charlotte, how happy this affurance makes me! He did not shew me the letter as he generally used to do; a plain proof it contains no other good news than what I have told you: but let me be ever grateful for that. Could I, with any reason, have expected the continuance of their favour and protection, after being the unhappy cause of all that trouble they have experienced within these few months? I certainly could not, for who but them, would fo eafily have pardoned and forgot the terrors and anxieties I had accasioned?

O, Charlotte, I had almost forgot to tell you Sir William is expected this sum-

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mer at B—. I insist on your company at that time, as I hope his presence will give new life to the charming scenes of that delightful place. I shall expect to hear from you before I leave London, as it will be at least a fortnight before I am blessed with a sight of B—, and its peaceful shades.—Rather too poetical this, for March—but one never forms any idea of the country without supposing it in full bloom, though it has charms for me even in its wintry garb, however strange such a declaration might appear to Miss Jones, and many other fair creatures, who would no doubt freeze at the very thought.

Adieu, Charlotte, believe me ever your

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LETTER XXXVII.

Miss Rowe to Miss Clarissa B ...

7 HY was I not permitted to accompany my dear Clara to B-, fince she has utterly spoiled me for living in this vile town? In vain I now try to find pleasures in those diversions that used, till you taught me to fee their infignificancy, to appear very tolerable. Even then I will confess they never gave me any violent transports, but I was persuaded they were as capable of it as any thing this world could afford, and I endeavoured to believe myself perfectly content and happy; but I can no longer be deceived, you have discoved to me that it is not in crowds of company we are to feek for true felicity. I am not very certain whether I ought to thank you for the knowledge, fince it. only ferves to make me feel a thousand difagreeable regrets and difappointments that, till now, I was a stranger to.

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The Miss Murrays were here yesterday, and when I, with great coolness and philosophy, excused myself—or rather attempted to do so—from being of their party to the Ridotto, they were astonished; declared I was the most altered creature they ever saw—absolutely ruined—in love to all intents and purposes, and evidently without hopes. Said, they had observed this change in my humour for some time, and begged I would discover to them the cruel creature, who had thus robbed me of my heart, and them of their sprightly friend.

You see what I get by your wise and sober lessons. Instead of being congratulated on the improvement I have made in my sentiments, and admired for the resined, exalted ideas I have acquired, I am pitied as a poor forsaken, or insipid creature, who has lost that portion of wisdom she once possessed. Tell me, Clara, ought I to thank you for your instructions, unless you could compleat the obligation by

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transplanting me into the dear country, where I may, with freedom, put them in practice? There I may look grave, without being at once pronounced either stupid or in love, and talk with contempt of quadrille, not only without fear of being thought ridiculous, but with applause. Either procure me this fatisfaction, or do me the favour to take back your rural fentimental notions, as I find them here not only useless, but perfectly troublesome and inconvenient. You see, Clara, I was obliged to confent, in fpite of my better judgment, to prevent their declaring in all companies, that poor Henny Rowe was dying for love.

Harry and Frank are to be of the party, to the no small joy of Miss Murray, who, to say truth, does ample justice to your friend Bellmour's charms. I am sure our smarts here have great reason to wish you had taken him back with you to the country, for he certainly makes many of the dear creatures look very small, on various occasions. As for poor

Colonel

Colonel Jones, the is become the most fober, quiet foul you ever faw. Between you and I, half this violent reformation would have fat much easier and more degagée upon him than the whole. I hope, however, when you have fent a figh or two in quest of your fwain, which will not fail to lay him instantly at your feet, he will be able to refume a little of his former gaiety, for I am convinced it is Harry'smust I condescend to say? - superior merit, that makes him appear to disadvantage. The good man is fo conscious of this difference, ever fince the twenty first of January, that he has not courage to difplay the little stock he is master of; though, to do Harry justice, he gives himfelf no airs upon it, I must say. Frank and he are this day gone into the city in order to finish the affair, that prevented his guarding my aunt and your ladyship to B-, which disappointment does not sit quite fo eafy upon him as might have been expected from his prodigious philofophy. I can

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MISS CLARISSA B-. - 219

I can but think what violent flutterations there will be in the hearts of the city Misses they are to dine with, for they received an invitation in form from Mr. Bellmour's lawyer, who begged they would do him that honour; and I know he has half a hundred daughters. What a treat will a couple of pretty fellows from Pall-mall be to the dear creatures! Little do they know the temptation their good father is preparing for them. I dont think it would be much amis if Frank was to bring off one of them, as they will, notwithstanding their number. have good fortunes, and their prudent Papa could certainly make no objections to an enfign in the guards for his fon-inlaw; for what signifies the want of a good estate, when compared to the honour of being called father by fo fmart a fellow? And as for the damfel, she will-if she has any taste in the world—think that deficiency greatly overpaid by his elegant cockade and flourishing regimentals. VOL. I. What

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What fay you to the match?—You shall know in my next, whether the youth had genius enough to discover the propriety of my scheme, without my instructions. I fear not—I wish I had given him a hint before he set out.

Adieu, my dear friend, let me entreat you to favour me with some of that time you dedicate to writing, as well as Miss Brudnell, who cannot love you more than I do, nor more highly value your agreeable correspondence.—Once more adieu believe me

Your's fincerely,
HENRIETTA Rows.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Miss Clarissa B- to Miss Brudnell.

Rejoice with me, my dear Charlotte, that I am once more feated in my own apartment at B—, from whose windows

dows I can indulge my eyes with a prospect of those delightful scenes where, with you, I have past so many serene and peaceful hours-how much more agreeable than that hurry and buftle I was accustomed to see in town! With what pleasure have I visited every sweet retreat! With what joy rambled through the noble park and gardens, eager to review every fpot which had fo frequently afforded me the most pleasing satisfaction! They appeared doubly agreeable to me after being so long banished, notwithstanding this is not the most favourable feafon for displaying there numberless beauties.

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I could not prevail on Mrs. Rowe to oblige me with her daughter's company, to our no small disappointment, as we had formed a thousand agreeable schemes that were all to be put in practice on our arrival at B—.

I believe I told you Harry is to stay fome time in London, to settle some af-L 2 fairs, fairs, which if he had not, would have obliged Mr. Bellmour to take that journey himself, who certainly must be more sit for the purpose—don't you think so Charlotte? As he must have more knowledge of those matters than his son can pretend to, it would certainly have been infinitely more prudent than to trust his business to so young a head. I did not, however, advise him to change places with him, nor do I believe it would have been followed if I had, as I cannot but believe his being in London, or rather absent from B—, is the chief point in view—for what, Charlotte, may not absence effect?

Mr. Brown has already been to pay me his respects, and by the reception he meets with, I can plainly discover their hopes are not yet given up in that horrid affair. They have said nothing of it yet, but I dread that subject's being started, every time I see the least gravity in the countenance of Mrs. Bellmour. How

can the old man be fo intolerably ridiculous! Think of his reverend figure leading forth a bride not eighteen! Who can bear to think of fo mortifying a contrast? He furely must have an amazing opinion of his amiable person, or he would never have ventured, as he did yesterday, to bring his nephew with him to pay us a visit. He is come to stay with him during the shooting season, and is certainly one of the worst persons he could have found, for he is really handsome, Charlotte, and not unlike Harry. At some moments, there is a refemblance in their manner, that could, you may believe, hardly fail to gain him my favour and fmiles. I have some reason to fancy he too discovered in me the features or complection of his mistress, as I caught him frequently eyeing me with no small attention. Should this be the case, we shall, no doubt, be a mighty defirable pair of objects to each other. The acquisition of a new acquaint-L2

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acquaintance, at this season of the year, when London has robbed us of almost all our neighbours, is no small pleasure. I have already been presented with a brace of partridges and a pheasant. Can I, think you, regret having left London, after all this? Nay, I am here the reigning belle of the place, an honour I could never have hoped for there. None of your arch remarks, Charlotte, to put me in mind that, where there is none but myfelf, I must needs be so of course.

I have just received a most agreeable letter from Miss Rowe, who very obligingly laments my absence, and declares I have, by my description of a country life, given her a perfect distaste to the town and insipid amusements; she is, however, creaged to go with the Miss Murray's to the ridotta, where, I doubt not, she will meet with some swain who will soon convince her, they are not quite so insipid as we, in our lober conversations, had pronounced them. Should this be my noble knight

knight the Colonel, he will, I believe, with wondrous ease, persuade her I had neither taste nor judgment. She diverted me highly by the account she gives of this reformed rake. Rakes are faid, you know Charlotte, to make the best husbands, and, I have a shrewd suspicion, her Ladyfhip is going to try the experiment. I am told, that he once gave plain indications of fuch a defire, though no formal declarations were made. Whether his adventure with a friend of yours may prevent his fuccess, should he renew his purpose, is uncertain, I mean on Mrs. Rowe's part, for the fair one, I am convinced, will not be fo obdurate as to reject him, after fuch evident marks of repentance and amendment.

Adieu Charlotte, write to me immediately to congratulate me on my return to B—, you cannot in civility refuse this.

Your's,

CLARA B-

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LETTER XXXIX.

To the SAME.

OW truly have I been diverted, Charlotte, with your inimitable letter!-Who ever equalled you in the art of description? I protest, I think I never was more highly entertained in my life, than with the picture you fent me of your lovely partner, and the splendid assembly. I can fancy I faw you, with all your airs and graces, flourishing down the dance, while he, good fober foul, is ftruck with fo much awe and admiration, at your elegant figure, that, instead of following his fair creature, he stands with eyes and mouth wide open, motionless as a statue, conscious of the dreadful contrast there is in the ill-matched couple, and, with a heavy heart, repenting his prefumption that tempted him to fingle you out of the croud to sport his figure with; while

while you, with perfect ease and unconcern, fwim down the room, as if determined to perform your part of the bufiness, whatever your fwain might do. Fie, Charlotte, how could you, by your bewitching fmiles, first tempt him to beg the honour of your hand, and no fooner grant him that favour, than you lay by that mild foftness which betrayed him, and assume a dignity that has frequently over-awed a more formidable beau? And, after being so fatally deceived, you pretend to be amazed he should not have one word to fay for himself. But you forget, he took you for the gentle mild creature you chose at that moment to appear, which if you had really been, he, no doubt would have convinced you of your mistake. The first flourishing speech you confess you made him, and that too on purpose to embarrass the unfortunate youth, was enough in all reason to affure him the common small talk, used on such occasions, would never do; and was it fo

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great a wonder, Charlotte, he should have no other? I declare, I think you highly deserved the mortification you endured; for that, I am fully convinced, you made the poor man suffer.

I am absolutely at a loss in what manner to fill up the rest of my paper. I have exhausted all my spirits in laughing at your perfectly droll epistle, and now find myself full as dumb as your gentle swain; nay worse, for I have not another word, to say either small or great. Shall I take down a book and write you out some diverting story, in return for yours? I find it will be impossible for me at present to repay that sayour in any other way, as my genius was never more dull.

Harry is still in London. But what of that? you'll say, his absence cannot surely affect my spirits, since I have made a positive resolution, nay a promise, to forget him.—Very true.—It's plain then, you'll tell me, he is not to blame for my stupidity. But did I say forget, Char-

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lotte?—I don't remember that difficult expression in the promise you mention.— I certainly could not make one that was so utterly impossible to keep; for is it not plain I can write with no degree of pleasure on any other subject? In vain I would endeavour to describe to you the assiduity I am savoured with from my new slave, or the elegant compliments he makes me on every occasion; they are lost upon me, Charlotte, and only serve to convince me of the amazing difference there is between—even him, agreeable as he really is, and the absent Harry.

We are just returned from a most delightful ride, of which exercise you know I am sometimes fond, and in which Mr. Aston now declares he takes great pleasure, though, I must just observe, he seemed to have forgot his passion for it, till I set him the example, and, by that means, brought it to his remembrance.

Mrs. Bellmour, who, in every particular, that of Mr. Brown excepted, is always kind and obliging, has proposed going to the assizes at York, or rather, I should say, the balls given there on that occasion. As I am sensible it is on my account she mentioned it, I could do no less than appear pleased with her indulgence. Mr. Aston is to be of the party.

Adieu, Charlotte, it is in vain to ask the favour of your company, nothing, I find, can tempt you to grant me that request. Shall I offer you my new lover?—for such he must unavoidably be in a few days, as he is to have the honour of my hand at the said ball, and that, you know, was the death of the poor Colonel's heart. Pray heaven, however, it may not inspire this more gentle captive with a passion so very desperate as his, since I find no manner of inclination to try what genius and taste he has for adventures. Adieu.

Yours,

CLARA B-

LET.

LETTER XL.

To the SAME.

Racious heaven! my dear Charlotte, to what mifery am I at last inevitably doom'd!—Unhappy as I have long been, I never was, till now, compleatly wretched.—My destiny is fixed, and I must submit.—All entreaties are inessectual; I am no longer heard with that indulgence I have ever been accustomed to. O, that hated ball! why was I, contrary to my inclination, prevailed upon to go to that fatal place?

I went, Charlotte, and there, to my inexpressible assistance as to appear agreeable to a man whose person and fortune are too unexceptionable for me to reject, with any shadow of reason, the offers he has made! Heaven knows what will become of me, for that I must reject them, however advantage-

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ous, is most certain.—But hear the dreadful particulars.

The moment I entered the room, I obferved Mr. Crawford fix his eyes upon me with great attention. When the ball began, he went up to Mr. Bellmour, with whom he had a flight acquaintance, and begged he would introduce him to me, that he might ask the favour of my hand for the evening. He came, and with great politeness, made his request. I, having no fuspicion he had any other view, affured him I was extremely forry I could not accept that honour, being before engaged. He appeared much difappointed-begged I would fo far indulge him as to dance a minuet, as that, he faid, would not very long detain me from the happy man who was to be bleffed with my hand for the rest of the evening. He led me up the room with no very bad grace, and danced genteelly enough.—I fear I do not on this occasion fay quite fo much as he deferves-had he never

never made any other demand, I might, perhaps, have done him more justice. He took no partner that night, but followed me fo close that I might, in reality, have been faid to dance with two. He missed no opportunity of faying of a number of fine things, all which, I imagined, the meer effects of gallantry, as fome men think it their duty to pay compliments to every woman they fee. When the affembly was over, I faw him in deep confultation with Mr. Bellmour. Their eyes, which were frequently turned to me, evidently declared I was the subject of their converfation, though I little imagined I was fo very nearly concerned in it. On our return to our lodgings, Mrs. Bellmour, with great gaiety, acquainted me with the conquest I had made, gave me joy on my good fortune, and hoped she might with more warmth plead the cause of my new lover, than ever she did that of Mr. Brown. You can, my dear Clara, have no objection to this gentleman's addresses-

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his person, fortune and family are unexceptionable. Let me, by your ready compliance to oblige us in permitting him to wait upon you, judge with what fincerity you spoke when you promised to think no more of an affair we will not at present mention. We have, in this, my dear girl, your happiness only in view, and are fo well perfuaded this offer cannot fail to enfure it, that we must be urgent for your confent .- I doubt not you will give it with pleasure, when Mr. Crawford has had an opportunity to convince you of his merit. He wishes for nothing more, he has defired permission to pay his respects to you at B-, and, I flatter myself, you will, with chearfulness, oblige us, by granting him that favour. He has defired the honour of dancing with you to-morrow, and I presume you did not engage yourself for both evenings to Mr. Afton.-No clouds, I befeech you, Clara--remember your promise, and prove, by an amiable behaviour, that you was finfincere.—Good night, my dear girl, let me find you in the morning with smiles, and in the disposition I wish. Mr. Bellmour adds his request to mine, and is too well convinced of your obliging temper to doubt your ready obedience

to doubt your ready obedience.

She left me, but not to rest.

She left me, but not to rest. How did I regret my coming to that dreadful place! How fincerely detest those diverfions that had ever been to me fo very unfortunate! I was tormented with a thousand distressing fears. In vain I endeavoured to rest; sleep, notwithstanding my fatigue both of mind and body, denied me its confolation, and the morning found me, if possible, more dejected than when I laid down. In vain I strove to hide my uneafinefs---it was but too vifible in my pensive countenance. Mrs. Bellmour looked displeased, but did not, I believe, intend I should observe it. She proposed an airing in the chaise to pass the time till dinner, as the hours hang rather heavy on one's hands at those

places

places during the morning. We met feveral ladies and gentlemen on the fame defign---Mr. Crawford among the number. He rode up and paid his compliments, then paraded by our carriage till our return, and meant to make himfelf, no doubt, amazingly agreeable; but that was now impossible. I knew his defign, and was, confequently, but little disposed to be pleafed with his civilities. He faw us home, where, after engaging me for the evening, which I durst not refuse, he took leave and left us to drefs for that occasion. You may believe I did not sit very long at my glass. Never had I so little desire to shine, nor did I wish to appear agreeable in the eyes of any, but one, who must now for ever be indifferent to me .-- O, Charlotte, what will my amiable Harry fuffer when acquainted with my miserable destiny!

The Evening came, and I was led forth by my new captive, with looks that did not, I believe, speak much of the conqueror. queror. My heart died when he approached me, but in spite of the dreary, woful figure I must have made, he was, as if in meer contradiction, determined to be pleased, and endeavoured to convince me of his admiration, by a thousand compliments that gave me infinite pain.

Tell me, my dear friend, have I not too much cause to complain? Am I not on the very brink of misery? Can I but be wretched every hour of my life, if doomed to lead that life with a man fo perfectly indifferent to me; nay one, I am convinced I shall ever greatly disapprove? He is already to me highly difagreeable. His manner is too assuming; there is a pride and haughtiness in him, which, in fpite of all his efforts, are extremely vifible to eyes like mine, who have fo much reason to examine his disposition. Yes, Charlotte, if I am really by my unfortunate stars doomed to be his, I am undone forever. Heavens! to what a fituation am I now reduced?-O, my lovely, amiable

miable Harry, how little do you suspect the pains they are preparing for you? I am now convinced, the bufiness which detains him in London will not be finished till my fate is determined. This is the affair, and only this, it is plain, beyond dispute, that prevents his return to B-How very cruel is their deceit? I have long fuspected it, and am certain they have given him hopes which they never meant to accomplish. A letter, Mr. Bellmour received from him the other day, has, I am persuaded, made him more anxious to have this shocking affair concluded than he was before; as in that, I believe, he was more than ever preffing for his confent to what, I am convinced, they have promifed to indulge him in. Is this generous, my dear friend? Can any thing be more cruel?—But adieu—I can write no more—this will fufficiently declare the mifery of your

CLARA B-

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

